



Rifftide: The Life and Opinions of Papa Jo Jones

Papa Jo Jones

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Finalist for Best Jazz Book of the Year Award from the Jazz Journalists Association

The things that I have, I'll give to you. This is my legacy with you, Albert. This is my last hoo-rah. So begins the autobiography of Jonathan David Samuel Jones—or as the world better knows him, Papa Jo Jones. Playing with Count Basie and his orchestra when they exploded out of Kansas City in 1936 and took the world by storm, Jones went on to inspire generations of jazz drummers, but until now few have had access to his own remarkable story.

Riff tide presents Jones's inimitable life and opinions, as originally told by Jones to the prominent jazz historian and novelist Albert Murray and now transcribed, arranged, and introduced by Paul Devlin. Drawn from fourteen tapes recorded over eight years beginning in 1977, *Riff tide* is an impressionistic series of riffs and tales by Jones: his life as a musician on the road in segregated America, his outstanding solo career following his years with the Basie band, and his interactions with iconic artists and cultural figures of the time, including Ralph Ellison, James Baldwin, Langston Hughes, Duke Ellington, Louis Armstrong, Bill "Bojangles" Robinson, and Satchell Paige.

A true American original and jazz luminary, Papa Jo Jones bedazzled and intrigued many with his outrageous, volatile personality and his innovative drumming—and nowhere does his fierce intellect and humor shine more marvelously than in his life's telling. With a fascinating introduction and annotations by Paul Devlin and an afterword by Phil Schaap, jazz historian and longtime friend of Jones, *Riff tide* reveals a man at the forefront of both a whole new form of music and a country in the midst of incredible turmoil and opportunity. As Jones himself puts it: *Listen man, I've had a hell of a time . . .*

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