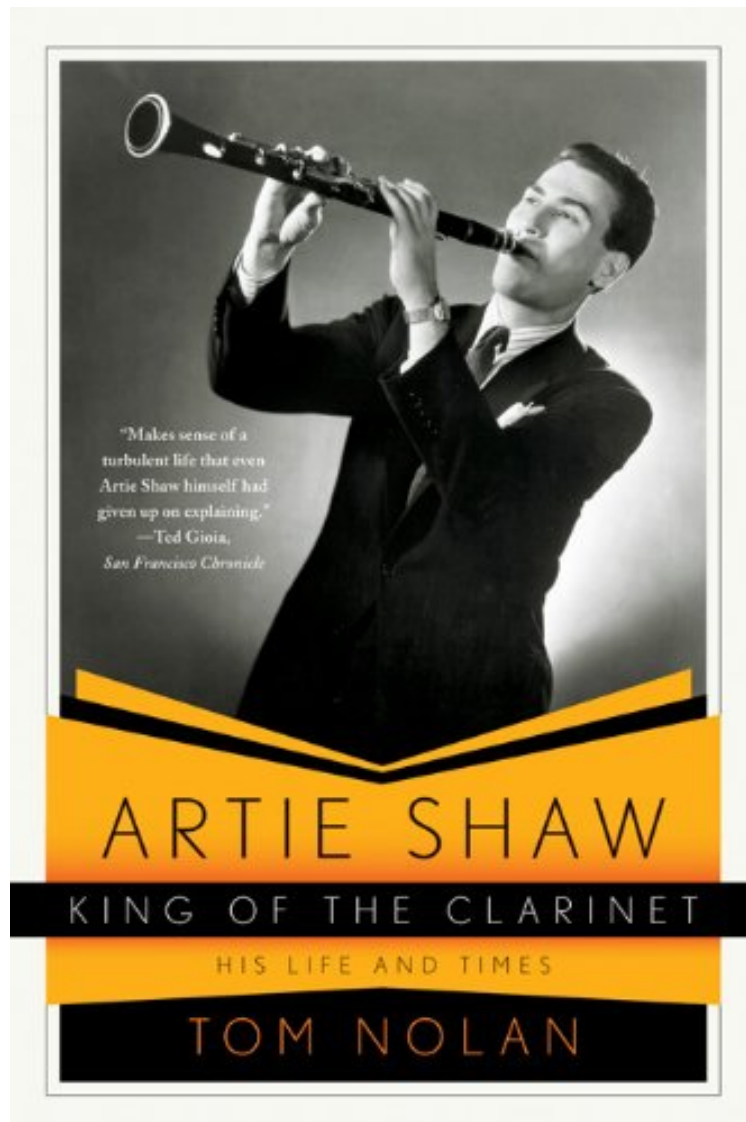


## Artie Shaw, King of the Clarinet: His Life and Times

Tom Nolan

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**Tom Nolan : Artie Shaw, King of the Clarinet: His Life and Times** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Artie Shaw, King of the Clarinet: His Life and Times:

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. The music business window that is Artie ShawBy Eric SedenskyArtie Shaw is one of those names that, growing up, I heard often and knew he was somebody famous, but never really paid attention to. Then, when I was much older and started studying jazz and its history, I recognized that this book was probably going to expose me to some aspects of jazz history that I wouldn't normally be exposed to, simply because Artie Shaw, it turns out, was one of those musicians who was his own man. As a result, Tom Nolan was able to write, not only a thorough and accurate biography, but he was able to reconstruct images of the jazz

business over a period of decades, through the eyes and experience of Shaw. Simply put, this is an incredibly informative and easy read. Shaw may not have been the most interesting jazz persona of the last 100 years, but given his penchant for fast beautiful women (often iconic movie stars), disregard of his own health and morals, and an incredible drive to not only be a master musician, but to be as knowledgeable and educated about the world at large as possible, Shaw seems to have been living on the extreme edges of a normal musician's life since his first record. I especially enjoyed Mr. Nolan's insight and perspective when it came to the people around Shaw, who sometimes admired him, and sometimes despised him, simply for who he was. It makes a great story, all the more interesting because it is true. I hope Mr. Nolan continues to write biographical and historical works that touch on the jazz world. He really brought Artie Shaw to life for me and gave me a greater understanding of jazz and the music business, while also providing me some insight into the history of entertainment in the United States as well. This book was a valuable, painless lesson, which is why I rate it at five stars.

6 of 6 people found the following review helpful. Egocentric artist still likable  
By Dick Stanley. I love this book. I even came away from it liking Shaw, despite his egocentrism, which must be the author's doing, his effort to be fair. And it doesn't seem to be because he left out any of Shaw's major flaws, because he included plenty of those. In the end, I felt sorry for Artie Shaw, essentially dying alone, with only his confusion and a hospice nurse for company. It's compelling that one of his estranged children made the effort to get to know him before the end, and summed himself and his father up very well, without any apparent bitterness. Aren't most great artists selfish? Were any of them very kind? They focus on their art and all else falls aside. The book has led me to buy some of Shaw's music. There's a clue to the man, I've decided, in the theme music he composed in 1936 and used ever after. I may try his books next.

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Being Aware of Artie Shaw  
By Marlou. In order to appreciate the intensity and the professional expertise of a clarinetist like Artie Shaw, this book is a must read. The drive and the passion that this famous musician dedicated to arriving at the "perfect" sound is worth noting. His musical compositions during the Big Band era were notable, particularly since they were unusual for that time. Other big band leaders became famous, but they weren't as compulsive as he was. Artie Shaw's life was a mixture of anger, shame, pride, stubbornness, egotistical competitiveness, social embattlements, and creativity. For such a handsome and talented man, tragic were his failed marriages to famous women (e.g., Lana Turner and Ava Gardner). His amorous relationships with his chosen women were simultaneously impulsive and depressing. Tom Nolan wrote about a musician who should never be forgotten. My parents, who were enthralled with his music during their youth, introduced me to his music, which they often played on the record player.

"The two sides of Shaw . . . are at the center of . . . [this] compulsively readable biography." —Daniel Akst, Wall Street Journal

During America's Swing Era, no musician was more successful or controversial than Artie Shaw: the charismatic and opinionated clarinetist-bandleader whose dozens of hits became anthems for the greatest generation. But some of his most beautiful recordings were not issued until decades after he'd left the scene. He broke racial barriers by hiring African American musicians. His frequent "retirements" earned him a reputation as the Hamlet of jazz. And he quit playing for good at the height of his powers. The handsome Shaw had seven wives (including Lana Turner and Ava Gardner). In veteran reader and author of three books, he befriended the best-known writers of his time. Tom Nolan, who interviewed Shaw between 1990 and his death in 2004 and spoke with one hundred of his colleagues and contemporaries, captures Shaw and his era with candor and sympathy, bringing the master to vivid life and restoring him to his rightful place in jazz history. Originally published in hardcover under the title *Three Chords for Beauty's Sake*.