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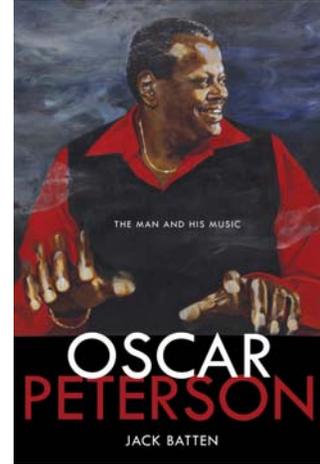
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# Oscar Peterson

## The Man and His Music

### by Jack Batten



The inspirational story of the “Maharaja of the Keyboard”

On a Thursday night in mid-September 1949, the musical giants from “Jazz at the Philharmonic” performed at Carnegie Hall in New York City. On this night, the troupe included the trumpeter Dizzy Gillespie, the singer Ella Fitzgerald, and the drummer Buddy Rich. At the beginning of the show’s second half, a young man sitting in the audience was invited to come onstage and play the piano. That young man was 24-year-old Oscar Peterson from Montreal, who stopped the concert “dead cold in its tracks.” This American debut marked the beginning of what was to become international recognition of Oscar Peterson as the world’s greatest jazz pianist. In time, his reputation extended beyond jazz as he became the most recorded of all pianists working in all musical genres – jazz, classical, and pop.

But Oscar Peterson’s climb to fame didn’t come without struggle. Growing up in a Montreal ghetto as the son of a sleeping-car porter, racism and ill health plagued him for much of his life. His journey was thrilling and inspirational, filled with both accomplishment and episodes of personal failure and redemption.

Jack Batten, a successful writer and former jazz reviewer for the *Globe and Mail*, has written a spellbinding account of a complicated musical genius who, against incredible odds, climbed to international acclaim in the great music halls of the world.

**JACK BATTEN** was a lawyer who has become a well-known author, journalist, radio personality, and reviewer. He has written over forty books, including biographies, crime novels, and books about sports. His non-fiction titles for young readers include *The Man Who Ran Faster Than Everyone: The Story of Tom Longboat*, winner of the prestigious Norma Fleck Award, the critically acclaimed *Silent in an Evil Time: The Brave War of Edith Cavell*, and the heartbreaking *The War to End All Wars: The Story of World War I*. Jack Batten lives in Toronto.

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