The best books about music can open the reader up to entirely new worlds. Artist biographies and influences, explanations of genres and historical facts, even works of fiction can bring the music to life and often create avid new fans. Here are some noteworthy books inspired by music.

**The Orphan’s Song** by Lauren Kate [Historical Fiction; Relationship Fiction; Orphans Fiction]

Lauren Kate harkens back to 18th-century Venice in this sweeping story about family and music intertwining the fates of two orphans and the secrets each hold. Kate takes us on a breathtaking journey of passion, heartbreak, and betrayal leading to an unforgettable ending.

*The Orphan’s Song* takes us on a breathtaking journey of passion, heartbreak, and betrayal before it crescendos to an unforgettable ending, a celebration of the enduring nature and transformative power of love.

**Love is Blind: the Rapture of Brodie Moncur** by William Boyd [Historical Fiction; Pianists Fiction]

In his latest work of historical fiction Boyd ventures into the complex relationship between a piano tuner, the pianist he works for, and the soprano with whom he becomes enthralled. This is a dazzling tale of passion and revenge and of artistic endeavor and the illusions it can create.

**Playing Changes: Jazz for the New Century** by Nate Chinen [Jazz – History and Criticism]

Famed music critic and National Public Radio contributor, Nate Chinen has created an invigorating and richly detailed portrait of artists and events in this latest guide to the contemporary jazz world. Chinen encourages the reader to listen to jazz anywhere and everywhere while offering a compelling argument for the resiliency of the art form.

**The Beautiful Ones** by Prince; edited by Dan Piepenbring [Autobiographies; Rock Musicians]

Though unfinished, Prince called his memoir “an unconventional and poetic journey” that celebrates the creative freedom he prized. Laced with quotes from a wealth of Prince interviews, this is a visually stunning labor of love that reveals the shy, vulnerable man behind the glitz and controversy.

Colleen
BOOK OF THE MONTH:

Life Undercover: Coming of Age in the CIA by Amaryllis Fox
[Biography; Women Intelligence Officers; Terrorism]

Amaryllis Fox was always interested in the world stage and people around the world who worked for peace. At age 18, she found a way to travel to Burma in the middle of anti-government riots, to interview Aung San Suu Kyi, the leader of the opposition movement. She managed to smuggle a tape of the interview to Bangkok where the BBC broadcast it. This drew the attention of both the CIA and journalist Daniel Pearl, who became a mentor. When Pearl was beheaded, Fox decided to do more, and attended Georgetown for a Master’s Degree in conflict and terrorism. This led to recruitment by the CIA at age 22, and eventually a coveted, but dangerous assignment as an agent with “non-official cover”, which basically meant she was on her own.

Imagine living in a foreign country, with no friends and no one to confide in. Fox was not allowed to tell her family what she was doing and basically existed in a world of lies. It was a lonely and isolated life, and extremely stressful. Eventually Fox married another agent, but they pursued different missions, and were unable to share their information. Despite these pressures, Fox was very successful at her job, tracking down terrorist plots, recruiting assets, and gathering information. Fox worked for the CIA for over a decade. This insider’s look at the intense training and lives of the men and women of the CIA is fascinating and a tribute to those who protect our country so the rest of us can sleep at night.

Fox’s memoir is gripping and forthright, reading almost like a spy thriller. It is narrative non-fiction at its best. Lovers of suspense, thrillers, and memoirs would all enjoy this well-written saga. The memoir ends with Fox’s decision to leave the CIA, but Fox is currently in a second career, co-hosting The History Channel’s American Ripper.

Mary Anne

All Staff Picks are available through the Ocean State Libraries system.

JAYNE
- Bish, Bash, Bosh!: Your Favorites, All Plants by Henry Firth & Ian Theasby [Vegan Cooking]
- Vegan for Everybody: Foolproof Plant-Based Recipes for Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner, and In-Between by the editors at America’s Test Kitchen [Vegan Cooking]

Jen
- Christmas Shopaholic by Sophie Kinsella [Holiday Fiction; Humor; Shopping]
- Threads by Sheryl Crow [CD; Duets; Rock Music]
- Twenty-One Truths About Love by Matthew Dicks [Romance Fiction; Lists]

Kristin
- Ballet Shoes [DVD; Warm Fuzzies; Performing Arts; Family]
- Meet Me in St. Louis [DVD; Musical; Historical; Slice-of-Life]
- The Secret Garden by Frances Hodgson-Burnett [Feel-Good; Classic; Coming-of-Age]

Miles
- A Fierce Discontent: The Rise and Fall of the Progressive Movement, 1870-1920 by Michael McGerr [United States History; Progressivism]
- The Fiery Trial: Abraham Lincoln and American Slavery by Eric Foner [United States History; Slavery]