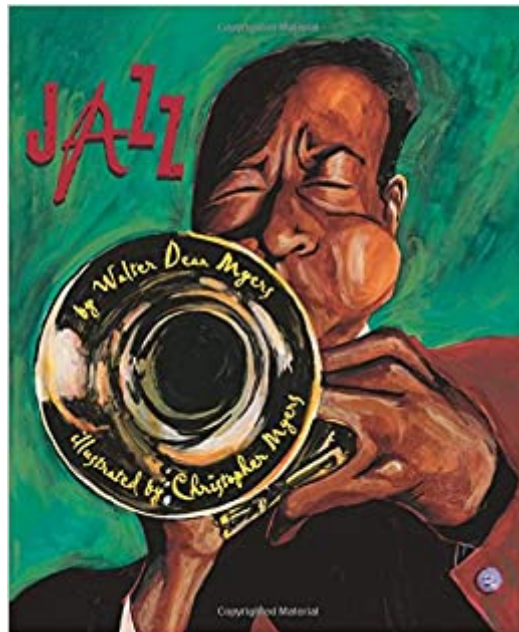




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Jazz (Coretta Scott King Illustrator Honor Books)



Synopsis

This smash-hit picture book of jazz music poems, from award-winning father-son team Walter Dean Myers and Christopher Myers, is now available in paperback. There's a crazy syncopation /and it's tearing through the nation / and it's bringing sweet elation / to every single tune./ It's Jazz/ From bebop to New Orleans, from ragtime to boogie, and every style in between, this collection of Walter Dean Myers's energetic and engaging poems, accompanied by Christopher Myers's bright and exhilarating paintings, celebrates different styles of the American art form, jazz. "JAZZ" takes readers on a musical journey from jazz's beginnings to the present day. Includes time line and jazz glossary.

Book Information

Series: Coretta Scott King Illustrator Honor Books

Hardcover: 48 pages

Publisher: Holiday House; First Printing edition (September 1, 2006)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0823415457

ISBN-13: 978-0823415458

Product Dimensions: 9.8 x 0.2 x 11.8 inches

Shipping Weight: 1 pounds (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 3.9 out of 5 stars 11 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #1,240,635 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #41 in Books > Children's Books > Arts, Music & Photography > Music > Jazz #288 in Books > Children's Books > Biographies > Musical #2617 in Books > Children's Books > Arts, Music & Photography > Performing Arts

Age Range: 8 - 11 years

Grade Level: 3 - 6

Customer Reviews

Starred Review. The father-and-son team behind *Blues Journey* creates a scintillating paean to jazz. Walter Dean Myers infuses his lines (and the rests between them) with so much savvy syncopation that readers can't help but be swept up in the rhythms. "Stride," for example, narrated by a piano man, captures the spirit of a "band on fire." On a delphinium-purple page, below each line of white type ("I got jump in my feet, and I'm turning up the heat, left hand hauling"), two significant words from that line dance in black script ("jump"/ "feet"), functioning like the chords a jazz pianist uses as

percussive punctuation within a tune. Visually, the page's typography evokes long white and short black piano keys. Christopher Myers lays black-inked acetate over brilliant, saturated acrylics. The resulting chiaroscuro conjures the deep shadows and lurid reflections of low-lit after-dark jazz clubs. The artist dynamically enlarges key compositional elements: a massive bass, a long ago drummer's muscular back, and fingers "poised over keys, plucking strings, splayed along a flute. Design sings here, too: Louis Armstrong's spread upends, befitting that jazz giant. A cogent introduction, selective glossary and chronology round out this mesmerizing verbal and visual riff on a uniquely American art form. All ages. (Sept.) Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.

Starred Review. Grade 5-9 "Expanding on *Blues Journey* (Holiday House, 2003), this talented father and son have produced new poetry and paintings to explore a wider repertoire of jazz forms. An introduction provides historical and technical background, briefly touching on influences, improvisation, rhythm, and race. Spreads then pulsate with the bold, acrylic-and-ink figures and distorted perspectives that interpret the multiple moods and styles set forth in the text. The poems begin *Along the Nile* with a drumbeat and conclude with the heat of a *Bourbon Street* band. The Myerses experiment aurally and visually with the forms themselves; thus, *Stride* alternates long, fast-paced lines in a white font with two-word percussive phrases in black, calling to mind a period piano score. *Be-bop* unleashes a relentlessly rhyming patter in black, punctuated by a blue cursive font that screams. The 15 selections also celebrate vocals, various instrumental combinations, a funeral procession, and Louis Armstrong; New Orleans as spirit and place is woven throughout. The expressionistic figures are surrounded by high-contrast colors in which the visible brushstrokes curve around their subjects, creating an aura that almost suggests sound waves. Wynton Marsalis's *Jazz A B Z* (Candlewick, 2005) offers an interesting comparison and complement: varied poetic forms and stylized, posterlike visuals present the lives of jazz musicians. Interaction with each inspired title informs the other and awakens interest in listening." Wendy Lukehart, Washington DC Public Library Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.

Very nice illustrations. It is more of poetry than a story about jazz, but I do appreciate it. I'd read this with probably late elementary age kids.

Any one who loves jazz and the jazz culture will be wooed by this lovely book. Illustrations by

Christopher Myers and fine poetry by Walter Dean Myers written in the text like music itself. This is a fine book for all ages, a treasure to American heritage.

The introduction and the timeline at the end were great. I should have looked more into the content of the book, however, because the rest of it was not as informative as I had expected. There were pages of poems that I'm assuming were meant as song lyrics, and not being a jazz expert, am assuming they were by the author rather than actual jazz musicians....which is not really that exciting to me. The illustrations are nice and now that I see the author and illustrator have the same last name, I can see this was probably more of a vehicle for the artwork of a relative than anything worthwhile from a literary perspective.

The book would have been great if it had come to me in one piece, but the binder was all torn. So the only thing I can think to do with it is frame the pages.

Jazz is a book created by Walter Dean Myers and his father. Their love of jazz brought this father-son duo together to create this beautifully illustrated book that goes into the different subgenres and styles of Jazz. From Bebop to Boogie and Ragtime, this book has it all. This book contains art with line styles that are similar to water flowing down a stream, and saturated colors that convey emotion. The art is used to illustrate lively poems that almost dance right off the page. This book is an excellent introduction to Jazz for children, and will really allow children not to just hear the emotion this is conveyed through Jazz but to feel it from the brushstrokes as well.

Okay. A bit of a confession here. Back in 2003 I wrote a review of "Blues Journey" in which I said many nice things including, "This is the book that took my breath away", which is fairly expansive even for me. Three years have now passed, and what father/son team Walter and Christopher Myers did for the blues they are doing now for jazz. Looking back on "Blues Journey", I realize that at the time this was not a book I was particularly good at understanding. I had the wherewithal to know that it was beautiful, but if you asked me the number of times I've thought about "Blues Journey" in this three year interim, the answer would be hardly at all. "Jazz" is different. I know it sounds unlikely, but I think this book has something its predecessor lacked. "Jazz" has a purpose, defined by its dedication ("To the children of New Orleans") and brought to searing sizzling life by both its author and its artist. No one can tell you after perusing this book that "Jazz" isn't hot as all get out. An introduction. For two green pages we are given some facts before the fancy. What is

jazz? Where are its roots? How did it grow, prosper, and come to flourish? Where is it today? That's a lot to slip into two little pages, but before you know it you've learned a fact or two and on you go to the poems. They echo what we've just discovered about the music itself. You're looking at a man, bare to the waist, beating out a rhythm on the drum just in front of him. Now it's a black silhouette of a piano player poised against a shifting deepening red background, lit from below. We're in New Orleans following a jazz funeral, then looking down on a charismatic keyboardist with a zoot suit of fine scarlet lines. Beautiful women croon to men curved over, above, and around their instruments. It's jazz, baby. With a glossary in the back and a timeline for kicks. Right off the bat I'd like to thank Mr. Myers senior for explaining something to me in his lengthy two-page Introduction that I didn't even know I didn't know. The birth of jazz: how did it happen? The answer can be found in a small selection at the bottom of the first page. "Since so many black musicians were still not formally trained in reading musical notation, there had to be some way of knowing what the other players were going to do so that they could perform together". So they used common chord structures that would allow them to "stray from the melody" and come back to it howsoever they were inclined. You would think that your average twenty-eight-year-old American would have picked up this kind of information somewhere amongst their various meanderings. Not so much. To Mr. Walter then, a debt of gratitude. Music related books for youth, be they picture books, novels, or comic books, have the awesomely difficult task of conveying an absent sense through words alone. Sometimes a picture might help, but it is the rhythm of the words that keep the toes tapping and throat humming. When this book began I wasn't quite in the right mind set. I read the poems the same way you might read something by Robert Frost or Emily Dickinson. But even my Neanderthal brain began to get into the swing of things when I encountered the poem, "Oh, Miss Kitty". It starts with a kind of blues refrain about the sweet Miss Kitty who's anything but small. Then the poem starts to get going. Without realizing it, your brain has suddenly started to add additional voices aside from the person "singing" the song. You read, "she's in love with the piano man" when suddenly words of a different color and font jump out of nowhere to say, "tickle them ivories, boy!". Who said that? To my mind, it's the jazz orchestra itself. And without even realizing it I'm hearing different voices, tones, rhythms, beats, and all with just the gentle prodding of Walter's words and some creative font use. Combine that with, what Joann Sfar in "Klezmer" called the, "silent melody of drawing", and you're as close as you'll ever get to fooling your ears through your eyes. I also happen to think that Christopher Myers is getting better and better as the years go by. A quick glance at the publication page and we see that the illustrations were done, "by painting black ink on acetate and placing it over acrylic". I have no idea what that means. Fortunately, I don't need to. Christopher is pushing

himself here, bringing to mind scenes of remarkable beauty. A bassist stands in the harsh white light, all white features against black shadows. I like Myers better when he presents his musicians rather than his dancers. For some reason, the swing dancers in "Jazz" seem to have less verve and pep than even the most soulful of saxophonists. Sometimes Christopher messes with you too. The poem "Session II" about a slide trombone is coupled against the image of a man playing the drums. "Session I", begins with, "Bass thumping like death gone happy", but instead there's a horn player standing front and center. Still, jazz is an ensemble creation. You don't blame an instrument if it appears where you thought another might crop up. Some leniency is required. Not too long ago I was with a group of librarians discussing "Jazz" at their leisure. It was the opinion of some that in spite of its picture book packaging, this is a teen book at its core. No violence or sexual references inspired such an assumption. It's just that "Jazz" has a kind of sophistication to it that children may not be accustomed to. I hear now the mighty roar of the masses saying something to the equivalent of, "Well GET them accustomed to it!". Why place this book in an area where teens will pooh-pooh it for its young packaging while the audience that might get something out of it finds it out of reach and inaccessible? And I agree with you there. Still, I would suggest that for those libraries savvy enough (savvy may equal rich in this case) to risk it, try putting "Jazz" in both areas. It won't speak to all the kids or all the teens, but sometimes "some" is just enough. We all have our favorite jazz related picture books. Most were created by Chris Raschka ("Charlie Parker Played Be Bop", "Mysterious Thelonious", "John Coltrane's Giant Steps", amongst others) with others filtering in here and there. My favorite is "Jazz". No children's book, to my mind, has acknowledged the New Orleans hurricane tragedy yet. No children's book has had the chance. And while I am certain that "Jazz" was in production before the hurricane ever hit, Myers and son have tipped their hat to the city's brilliant musical past with just the right book. You'd be a fool to let yourself pass this one up.

I gave this book to my son for Christmas. He's a Jazz student and History major at a local University, and loves the book. Walter Dean Myers is a great writer, and his son's a talented illustrator.

I checked this book out from the library and I love it. Whether you look at the pictures or read the poetry you will feel jazz. The illustrations are intense, vibrant, energetic, playful. Each picture is accompanied by a poem (or more). You will hear jazz when you read the poems. If you are a musician, you must need to make jazz when you read these. Included are an introduction about the history of jazz, a glossary of jazz terms and a list of important dates and events in jazz history. I

could only wish for a few white people in the book. You know we like jazz too.

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