

JAZZ ABZ: AN A TO Z COLLECTION OF JAZZ PORTRAITS

Louisiana Young Readers' Choice Award Nominee 2008 Grades 6-8

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Jazz ABZ: An A to Z Collection of Jazz Portraits by Wynton Marsalis. Illustrated by Paul Rogers. Candlewick Press, 2005. 76 pages.

Summary

Marsalis has written twenty-six poems as tributes to twenty-six jazz musicians. Each poem reflects the musical style of the performer. The words in each poem highlight the letter in the alphabet and the accomplishments of said performer. Brief biographies by Phil Schapp are included. The bold, poster-like illustrations complement the words in the poems. The poems are most effective read aloud like slam poetry, beat poetry or hip-hop. Each of the poetic forms used by Marsalis is described. This book will be enjoyed by jazz buffs and poetry-lovers and may encourage many readers to learn more about music and about poetry.

Awards and “Best Book” Lists

2006 Bologna Ragazzi Special Award – Words and Music
2006 NCTE Notable Children’s Books in the Language Arts
2006 IRA Notable Children’s Book Award, Young Adult Nonfiction
2006 ALA Best Books for Young Adults Nominee

Author’s Biography

Wynton Marsalis was born in New Orleans on October 18, 1961. He began playing trumpet at the age of twelve, and at fourteen, he was invited to perform with the New Orleans Philharmonic. He entered the Juilliard School of Music at age seventeen. In 1978, he joined Art Blakey and the Jazz Messengers and subsequently made his recording debut in 1982. Since then, he has earned nine Grammy Awards. In 1983, he became the first and only artist to win both classical and jazz Grammy Awards in the same year. He repeated this in 1984. In April 1997, he became the first jazz artist to be awarded the Pulitzer Prize in music for his work “Blood on the Fields.” He also created the popular series “Jazz for Young People” at the Lincoln Center in New York. He is the artistic director of Jazz at Lincoln Center, and the music director of the Lincoln Center Jazz Orchestra. He is presently resides in New York City and is the father of three boys.

www.wyntonmarsalis.org/biography/

www.wyntonmarsalis.net

www.achievement.org/autodoc/page/mar0bio-1

Other Titles by Wynton Marsalis

Marsalis on Music

Sweet Swing Blues on the Road

To a Young Jazz Musician: Letters from the Road

Illustrator’s Biography

Paul Rogers thinks of himself as a graphic designer, not an illustrator. He is a native of Pasadena, California, and graduated from Art Center College Pasadena in 1980, with a BFA in advertising. He has been a poster artist and graphic designer for twenty-five years. *Jazz ABZ* is the first book he has illustrated. He created the official posters for the 2002 and 2004 New Orleans Jazz and

Heritage Festival and was invited to create a portrait of Wynton Marsalis, which was published as a limited edition for the Festival. He also created the poster for Super Bowl XXXVII. When he is not at the drawing board in his studio, he is at Dodger Stadium with his son, Nate, or teaching his daughter, Alexandra, how to parallel park, or in a jazz club listening to music with his wife.

www.paulrogersstudio.com

www.theartworksinc.com/face/prface.htm

Related Titles

Jazz Nonfiction

Jazz by Walter Dean Myers and Christopher Myers.

Charlie Parker Played BeBop by Chris Raschka.

Louis Armstrong: Jazz Musician by Patricia and Fredrick McKissack.

Giants of Jazz by Studs Terkel.

Jazz: My Music, My People by Morgan Monceaux (forward by Wynton Marsalis).

Extraordinary People in Jazz by Marvin Martin.

The History of Jazz by Sandy Asirvatham.

Jam!: The Story of Jazz Music by Jeanne Lee.

The Louis Armstrong You Never Knew by James Lincoln Collier.

Wynton Marsalis by Veronica Freeman Ellis.

Jazz is the Word: Wynton Marsalis by Margaret Gry Malone.

Books About Poetry

R is for Rhyme: a Poetry Alphabet by Judy Young.

The Teachers & Writers Handbook of Poetic Forms edited by Ron Padgett.

Poem-Making: Ways to Begin Writing Poetry by Myra Cohn Livingston.

Poetry Matters: Writing a Poem from the Inside Out by Ralph Fletcher.

How to Write, Recite and Delight in All Kinds of Poetry by Joy N. Hulme and Donna Guthrie.

Poetry from A to Z: A Guide for Young Writers by Paul B. Janeczko.

Classroom Connections

- Use the lesson plans and activities from <http://pbskids.org/jazz/lesson/index.html> They were designed to be used with PBS JAZZ video series and the companion web site but can be adapted for use as stand alone resources.
- Have students research the history of jazz and make a timeline showing the decade and data for the following eras: ragtime, Dixieland/New Orleans jazz, Swing, Bebop, Kansas City jazz, European jazz, Gypsy jazz and avant-garde jazz.
- Assign each student the name of one of the musicians included in the book to research and make a PowerPoint presentation or booklet with the information.

National Education Association Jazz in the Schools Curriculum

<http://www.neajazzintheschools.org/home.php>

This is “a web-based curriculum and DVD toolkit that explores jazz as an indigenous American art form and as a means to understand American history.” This is an excellent resource.

Smithsonian Jazz Class

http://www.smithsonianjazz.org/class/jc_start.asp

This is a real treasure trove of lesson plans and information related to jazz.

April is Jazz Appreciation Month

www.menc.org/guides/jazz/jazzappreciation.html

Detailed lesson plans about the history, styles, and distinguishing characteristics of jazz.

PBS Jazz

<http://pbskids.org/jazz/>

This site includes biographies, timelines, an interactive game, interviews with musicians and several excellent lesson plans.

The English Room --- 30 Days of Poetry (for middle and high school students)

www.msrogers.com/English2/poetry/30_days_of_poetry.htm

This site has lesson plans for 30 days of poetry writing. Students will write a different type of poetry each day, such as concrete poetry, synonym poetry, diamante, contrast poetry, and sense poetry.

Web Sites

Jazz at Lincoln Center

<http://www.jalc.org>

This site includes a wealth of information about activities at the Lincoln Center, including links to information for students and to curriculum guides related to jazz.

Biographies of Jazz Musicians

<http://42explore.com/jazz2.htm>

This site provides links to biography sites for jazz singers and musicians in alphabetical order.

Interview with Wynton Marsalis

<http://content.scholastic.com/browse/article.jsp?id=2264>

The transcript of a live interview with Wynton Marsalis on February 26, 2006.

Scholastic: Culture and Change: Black History—History of Jazz

http://teacher.scholastic.com/activities/bhistory/history_of_jazz.htm

At this site, you are able to listen by audio clips as Wynton Marsalis explains improvisation, explains the Ellington Effect, and gives a short history of bebop.

Wynton Marsalis.net

www.wyntonmarsalis.net/index2.html

Listen to Marsalis's work at this site.

Jazz: A Film by Ken Burns

www.pbs.org/jazz

This is a companion site to the Ken Burns's "Jazz" ten-part series.

NPR Jazz

www.NPRJazz.org

National Public Radio's online jazz programs and information site.

Red Hot Jazz

www.redhotjazz.com

Online recordings of jazz before 1930.