

Synopsis

In a text that grooves and swings with the rhythms of jazz, Don Carter celebrates some of America's greatest jazz legends. Grandpa Jack loved jazz. He called it "heavenly." So now that heaven is where Grandpa Jack is at, his grandson imagines it to be a place filled with music. In a club called the Cotton, Grandpa Jack can hear all his favorite musicians play together in Heaven's All-Star Jazz Band. And when that glorious music has filled his soul, Grandpa Jack steps up onto the stage and adds his own bit of rhythm with his famous spoons solo. Don Carter celebrates some of jazz's greatest legends and the lasting bond their music creates between a boy and his grandfather.

Book Information

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Age Range: 5 - 8 years

Grade Level: Kindergarten - 3

Customer Reviews

In this ambitious and inviting ode to jazz, an African-American boy imagines what heaven is like when his music-loving grandfather joins idols such as Dizzy Gillespie, Thelonious Monk and Charlie Parker. Visually, the book is a tour de force. Carter's (Wake Up House!) distinctive, 3-D concoctions of foam board, bright acrylic paint and plaster, successfully translate a lofty abstraction into a joyful feast for the senses. "Every night in heaven/ The jazz is hot/ in a club called Cotton," a paradisiacal honky-tonk that blissfully mixes the celestial (thick, cake frosting-like clouds, stars and feathery angel wings) and the earthly (Satchmo singing scat, couples dancing and Duke Ellington seated at

a white baby grand). Round, bespectacled Grandpa quietly soaks up the tunes until he finally earns wings-and a spot in "Heaven's All-Star Jazz Band." Despite the visual extravaganza, the clunky rhymes and nostalgic theme may unfortunately leave children cold. Numerous, breezy references to long-gone (however legendary) musicians and recurring references to Gillespie's composition "Salt Peanuts," will likely appeal more to jazz-loving parents, who may well relish the opportunity to fill in the gaps and make converts of the next generation. Ages 5-8. Copyright 2002 Reed Business Information, Inc.

Kindergarten-Grade 3-From its captivating endpapers to its funky title page, this book will draw readers in with its strong, pulsing beat. A small boy imagines that his Grandpa Jack, who loved jazz and who is now up in heaven, is surrounded by all the greats. In Heaven's Cotton Club, there's an all-star band filled with all the immortals from Louis Armstrong to Charlie Parker to Miles Davis. Grandpa Jack hangs back, nervous about being in the company of these jazz legends, but the music draws him in and finally, after watching the singers and musicians he's loved all his life, he starts moving and grooving to their sounds, even playing the spoons. His musicality earns him his angel wings. Foam-board collage paintings with thick brush strokes give many figures and scenes a three-dimensional appearance. Rachel Isadora's *Bring on That Beat* (Putnam, 2002) and Chris Raschka's *Charlie Parker Played Be Bop* (Orchard, 1992) use illustration with minimal text to celebrate the sound and beat of the music. Jonathan London's *Hip Cat* (Chronicle, 1993) and Alice Faye Duncan's *Willie Jerome* (Macmillan, 1995) tell more of a story. This book does both, using sound words, rhyme, and rhythm with stylized illustration to tell an imaginative tale and pay tribute to the music and its stars. Jane Marino, Scarsdale Public Library, NY Copyright 2002 Reed Business Information, Inc.

I read this book to my son when he was a toddler, and we listened to a number of the artists and songs in the book. I talked to him about how my father introduced me to jazz, and now that my father is jammin with Heaven's All Star Jazz Band this book makes me feel closer to him. As a PreK teacher, I used this book as the central text for a theme on Jazz and Jazz musicians during African American History Month. I put together a photo album with many of the artists in the book and either played them songs that are mentioned in the book or songs that each artist was famous for. By the end of February, I had a group of 13 4- and 5-year olds who could identify artists by photo alone, name an instrument that they played and hit the "salt peanuts, salt peanuts" riff on time!! I adore this book. Thank you Don Carter! And thanks to my father, Cedric Hinson for raising me on such quality

music. You live on in my love of jazz.

The artwork in this book is gorgeous and this is a lovely way to introduce my kids to these musicians. Very happy with this purchase.

I found this book to be very entertaining. However, an adult would probably have to be a jazz fan to really appreciate it.

I am a school volunteer who read this book aloud to a fifth grade class. I also borrowed some CDs from the library and made a tape of short pieces from some of the mentioned musicians -- Dizzy's Salt Peanuts, Louis Armstrong (It Don't Mean a Thing if it ain't got that swing) and Billie Holiday. The soundtrack really made it come alive for the 10 and 11 year olds, who were happily groovin' along. I think it helped them appreciate how current music relates to the past, and how love and respect for their elders can lead to some great discoveries and shared fun between generations.

Loved this book! In subtle tones it allows young children to understand that moving on is a great thing! Kids learn about great jazz musicians and what heaven is like for beloved patriarchs.

Fabulous, fabulous book!

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