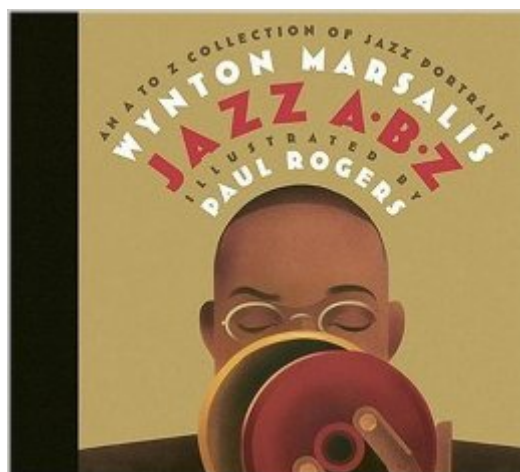


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# Jazz ABZ: An A To Z Collection Of Jazz Portraits



## Synopsis

In a swinging improvisation with poster artist Paul Rogers, Wynton Marsalis celebrates the spirit of twenty-six stellar jazz performers, from Armstrong to Dizzy and showcases the same number of poetic forms. A is for "almighty" Louis Armstrong, whose amazing artistry unfolds in an accumulative poem shaped like the letter he stands for. As for sax master Sonny Rollins, whose "robust style radiates roundness," could there be a better tribute than a poetic rondeau? In an extraordinary feat, Pulitzer Prize-winning jazz composer Wynton Marsalis harmonizes his love and knowledge of jazz's most celebrated artists with an astounding diversity of poetic forms from simple blues (Count Basie) to a complex pantoum (Charlie Parker), from a tender sonnet (Sarah Vaughan) to a performance poem snapping the rhythms of Art Blakey to life. Matching Wynton Marsalis's musical cadences note for note is the bold, poster-style art of Paul Rogers, highlighted in two phenomenal foldout spreads. The art's vibrant nostalgic feel is echoed in an exquisite design, with its size simulating an old 78 LP and its endpapers die-cut to mimic a vintage record sleeve. Complete with a discography and brief biographies of the featured musicians as well as notes on the various poetic forms, this is truly an incomparable gift book for older children learning about jazz, longtime jazz aficionados, lovers of poetry, and readers of all ages who appreciate the finest in book design.

## Book Information

Lexile Measure: NP (What's this?)

Hardcover: 76 pages

Publisher: Candlewick; Nov Gift edition (October 25, 2005)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0763621358

ISBN-13: 978-0763621353

Product Dimensions: 11.4 x 0.6 x 10.3 inches

Shipping Weight: 1.6 pounds

Average Customer Review: 4.5 out of 5 stars [See all reviews](#) (11 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #474,639 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #19 in [Books > Children's Books > Arts, Music & Photography > Music > Jazz](#) #119 in [Books > Children's Books > Biographies > Musical](#) #714 in [Books > Children's Books > Biographies > Multicultural](#)

Age Range: 9 - 12 years

Grade Level: 4 - 7

## Customer Reviews

This book is infectious! For those committed and devoted to Jazz this is a book that will bring smiles and memories and plaudits to the many giants of this most American of music forms. But to those of us whose knowledge of the impact of jazz on the spirit of music has always been from the periphery, here is a book to discover and celebrate an idiom so joyous in nature and in the presentation of this book that new converts are guaranteed! The concept of presenting famous jazz figures from A to Z (in actuality from Louis Armstrong to DiZzy Gillespie) is a sound one in that it does not tend to group artists by style or time. Each of the featured giants is introduced in poetic form written by Wynton Marsalis, poems that ring of jazz styles themselves. Additional succinct biographical data is sprinkled throughout the handsome design of the book. And each of the figures is brought to visual life by the stunning artwork of Paul Rogers, an illustrator who obviously loves and understands jazz in tandem with Marsalis. Though this book is being marketed for youngsters ages 4 - 8 or for junior high students, the book as an artwork and as an introduction to the world of jazz is so well done that it makes a terrific excursion for readers of any age and degree of jazz sophistication. Highly Recommended. Grady Harp, May 06

Before I post my review, I'd like to make a correction to 's book information which states this book is for ages 4 to 8. Jazz ABZ would work extremely well in a high school or college jazz history class, and would be a hip coffee table book gift for a jazz fan, but it's not for young children! This is a visually stunning and brilliantly written book. The first page instantly grabs you: it has a large round hole in the center to resemble a classic lp record sleeve. The second page is a glossy black picture of a record with the author information listed on the record label. Wynton Marsalis collaborated with artist Paul Rogers to create this beautiful book. They selected famous jazz musicians for each letter of the alphabet. Marsalis wrote poems using a variety of poetic forms to fit each musician's unique playing/composing style. Many of the poems were written while Marsalis was touring, and he read and refined them with the other musicians on the bus or plane during the course of their travels. While Marsalis has very strong opinions about other jazz musicians (the PBS Ken Burns series, while interesting, was essentially "Jazz According to Wynton"), he keeps his opinionated and didactic sides at bay and focuses on the task at hand with this book. Jazz ABZ is a book that assumes its readers have a decent understanding of jazz terms and forms. For this reason, it's not appropriate for elementary school readers (unless they have an unusually advanced understanding of this music). Imagine reading "Couldn't he just keep on cascading through closely clustered chord changes, cartwheeling through complex, careening, chromatic calculations?" to introduce third graders to the music of John Coltrane... I think not. Most of the poems work well with the illustrations

and the different musician's personalities and music. The back of the book includes excellent short biographical sketches of each musician by Phil Schaap. Highly recommended.

I found this book on sale at a local bookshop and instantly fell in love with it. Not only does it provide an introduction to Jazz but it also became a perfect tool to create a Jazz theme for my classroom. Although wordy it makes a wonderful demonstration on the power of an oral performance, and the poems can be adapted for students to allow them to create their own. A great way to add cultural diversity for those who are tired of the slavery and civil rights curriculum. A must have for teachers.

The art work is first rate: each page would make a great poster, it's that stylized and refined. The print and colors are high quality and elegant. The selection of jazz greats -- only one musician per letter -- may seem unfair and arbitrary to some readers. But hey, it doesn't promise to be an encyclopedia or who's who! Loosen up! Remember, it's an intro for kids! I like how it's light and not \*too\* educational and pedantic. My gripe that it's too wordy, too poetic. It's extremely tiring to read to the little ones, especially late at night at crankytime. If there were a dumbed down, large text version, I would buy it. Seriously.

I collect alphabet books and this one is superb! I sent a copy to a friend who is a jazz musician and he was quite impressed...and of course, I kept a copy for myself!

This is a great book for introducing jazz to kids. It has artwork very reminiscent of the work of the Harlem Renaissance.

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