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music

Paint That Funky Music, White Boy: Chris Raschka's Charlie Parker Played Be Bop, The Genie in the Jar, Mysterious Thelonious, and John Coltrane's Giant Steps

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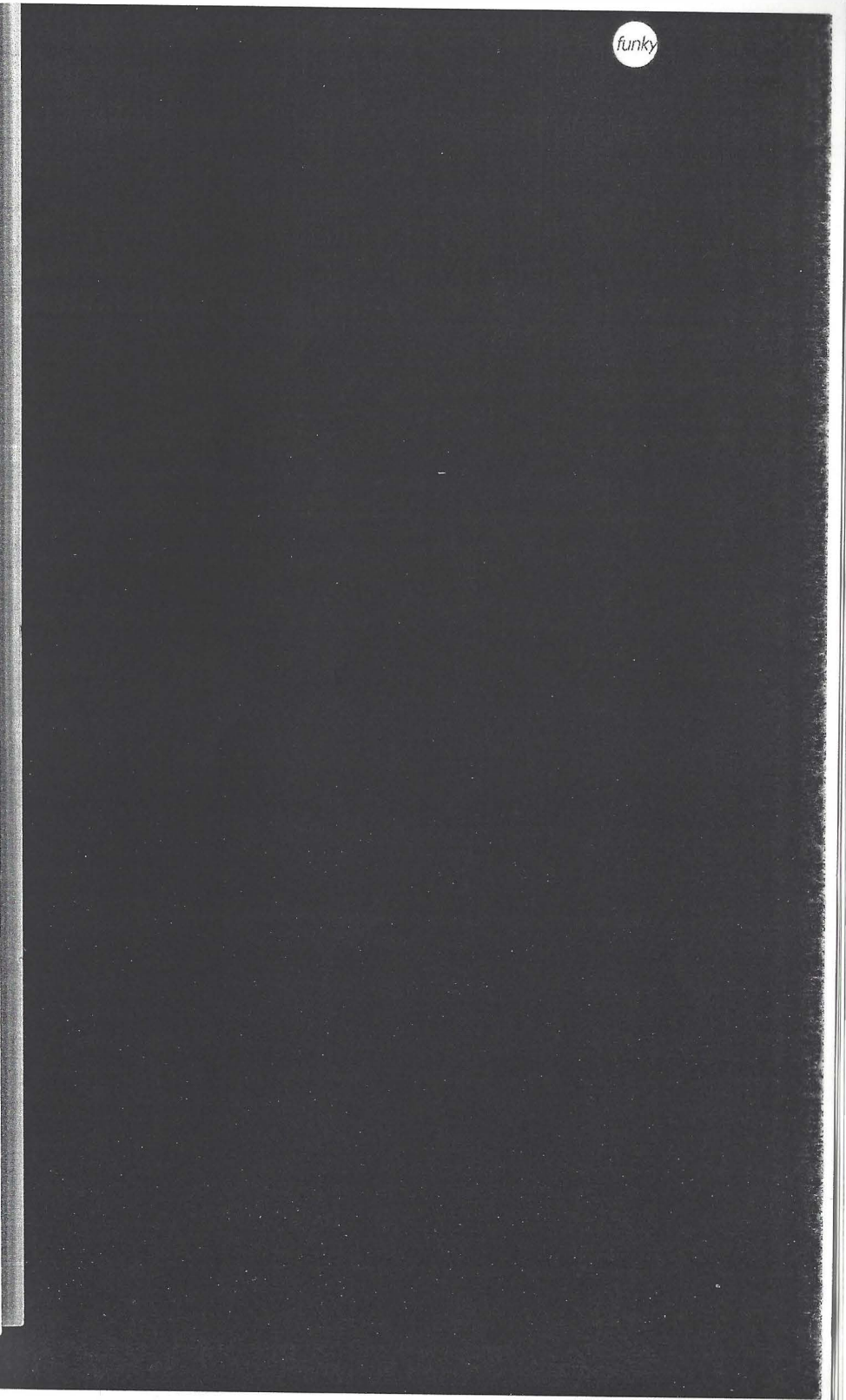
Music critic Gary Giddins presents innovation as the heart of jazz music when he states, 'Jazz is the ultimate in rugged individualism. It's going out there on that stage and saying: It doesn't matter how anybody else did it. This is the way I'm going to do it.' (Ward 2000, p. xv). Within the pages of each of what might be termed his jazz ensemble of picture books, *Charlie Parker Played Be Bop* (1992), *Genie in the Jar* (1996) *Mysterious Thelonious* (1997), and *John Coltrane's Giant Steps* (2002) Chris Raschka steps out on stage as a white artist exploring a uniquely African American art form and as a visual artist trying to capture the essence of a particular branch of performance art. In doing so he wholeheartedly embraces innovation,[i] and he offers works that cross boundaries of media and culture while presenting exciting new directions for the picture book as an art form.

In *Charlie Parker Played Be Bop* and in his later jazz books, Raschka is uninterested in presenting biographies of the jazz artists at the center of his works and instead creates concept books on jazz music. His approach is to translate the music itself into the picture book format using visual art properties of color, line, shape and composition to communicate the sound, spirit and rhythms of jazz music in his illustrations, which are bolstered by his considerable skill as a wordsmith. A musician himself, Raschka was inspired to create *Charlie Parker* by the be bop anthem, 'A Night in Tunisia,' which features one of Parker's most celebrated virtuoso solos on the alto saxophone. Describing the process of writing the text for this book Raschka states, 'I went at it basically from the notion that speech and language are a kind of music, and probably where music comes from – it comes from the rhythms of speech. And so I kind of reversed it and turned the rhythms of music back into speech in the poetry or the lines that I wrote' (Davis interview 1998). Indeed, critic Richard Ammon writes, 'Most incredible is Raschka's infusion of rhythm into what is an inert form – the picture book' (1999, p. 226), and that rhythm is found not only in Raschka's words, but in his pictures as well.[ii]



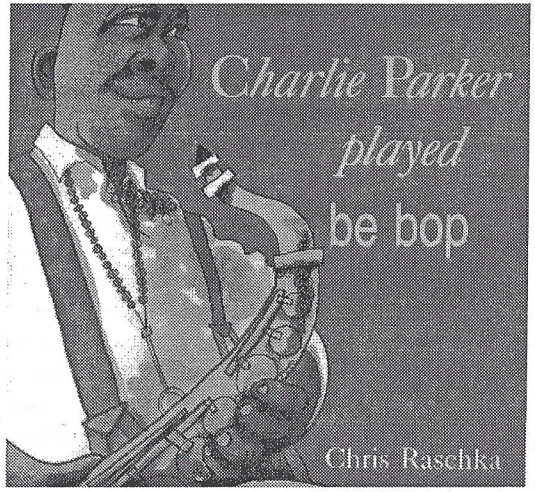


Figure 1: cover of Charlie Parker Played be Bop

Furthermore, Parker's music is renowned not only for its rhythms, but also for its elements of humor and surprise, and it is the successful incorporation of this playful spirit into the rhythm of Raschka's words that makes *Charlie Parker* so remarkable.[iii] In *Charlie Parker* (and in all of Raschka's picture books) text and art are highly dependent upon one another,[iv] resulting in images that play off words, and vice versa, leading critic Bill Ott to second Ammon's praise and state, 'Like a good bass player, his words set the rhythm, and like a saxophone solo, his pictures deliver the surprise and the humor' (1992, p. 1843).

The text immediately captures readers with the spirit of Parker's music as it begins: 'Charlie Parker played be bop./ Charlie Parker played saxophone./ The music sounded like be bop./ Never leave your cat alone' (*Charlie Parker*, unpaginated). Raschka goes on to communicate the playful tone of Parker's music by cleverly drawing on the saxophonist's nickname, Yardbird or Bird, and on words from various songs in his repertoire to build up a series of nonsense words mimicking the sounds of jazz instruments. These words take on syncopated rhythm moving the reader through the pages at a lively, quickening pace: 'Be bop. Fisk, fisk. / Lollipop. Boomba, boomba./ Bus stop. Zznnzznn./ Boppitty, bippity, bop. BANG!'.

Despite the immediate critical acclaim for *Charlie Parker*, concerns about the book emerged amidst the necessary furor over cultural authenticity and adequate representation of diverse subjects and subject matter in children's books. Writes Ammon, 'I did wonder how African-Americans would feel about a book featuring a Black jazz musician that was created by a white artist/writer.' (1999, p. 227). Ammon goes on to say that Dizzy Gillespie's positive review in *Entertainment Weekly* allayed his concerns, and although Gillespie cannot be expected to represent all African-Americans, given his close personal and artistic relationship with Charlie Parker,[v] his enthusiastic reception of Raschka's work certainly stands as high validation. In fact, Raschka later stated in an interview, 'That review will remain the high point of my career. I can't imagine anything greater than that – it was so wonderful' (Davis).

Figure 2: cover of Yo! Yes

This interview took place in 1998, so perhaps the Gillespie review meant even more to Raschka than his 1993 Caldecott Honor for *Yo! Yes?*. His first publication after *Charlie Parker, Yo! Yes?* is a spare and vividly emotional picture book depicting a budding friendship between two boys of different races.[vi] It helped secure Raschka's reputation as both a talented contributor to children's literature and as an actively anti-racist artist who consistently avoids tokenism,[vii] smashes stereotypes and never stoops to didacticism. In a special column for *The Horn Book Magazine* in which authors and illustrators were invited to name a future classic – a book s/he '...would want to put into the hands of a child today and a hundred years from now' (Woodson 2000, p. 777) – author Jacqueline Woodson named *Yo! Yes?* stating:

> I believe there will always be a fear of 'the other'. And because the solution was, is, and always will be about communication, I choose Chris Raschka's *Yo! Yes?*...in [which] two people meet across the lines of race and form a friendship. Through spare, uncomplicated and inviting language, Raschka moves us through the boys'/people's doubt and loneliness into a place of hope...I believe books like *Yo! Yes?* push the world toward thought and action and change and that is what art is meant to do. I believe there will always be room in our world for growth and change, and a book in the hands of a child is a beginning' (2000, p. 777).

Alluding to Raschka's solid reputation as an artist reaching across cultural boundaries with his work, critic Hazel Rochman lavished praise on his 1999 collaboration with bell hooks in *Happy to Be Nappy* stating, '...this picture book celebration of happy nappy hair [is] welcome. And, who better to do it than the great black feminist writer hooks, whose adult books include the powerful memoir *Bone Black: Memories of Girlhood* (1996) and Raschka, whose fine picture books include *Yo? Yes!* (1993)' (1999, p. 2064).

While Raschka was an excellent choice of illustrator for hooks's text, a stronger connection between *Happy to Be Nappy* and Raschka's previous work can be found with *Charlie Parker*, or even more powerfully with Nikki Giovanni's tribute to pianist, composer and singer Nina Simone, *The Genie in the Jar*. Unlike *Yo! Yes?*,

which centres on interracial harmony, in *Charlie Parker* Raschka presents an affirming, celebratory, and singularly African-American image. *The Genie in the Jar* does the same. Both provide a more natural connection with *Happy to Be Nappy's* message of Black empowerment as it takes the essence of the slogan, 'Black Is Beautiful' and celebrates Black girls through hooks's romping verse and Raschka's vibrant pictures.

Ultimately, the most profound connection between *Yo! Yes!'s* vision of interracial harmony and *Happy to Be Nappy's* and *The Genie in the Jar's* compelling images of Black empowerment lies not in theme, but in the fact that the former (interracial harmony) cannot exist without the latter (Black empowerment). Raschka's work shows devotion to presenting both sides of this equation, and his jazz ensemble along with *Happy to Be Nappy* demonstrate that artists can successfully create images outside of their own experience – in this case a white man creating images of Black people of both genders – and the fact that he is one of very few white artists to successfully and consistently do so suggests the difficulty inherent in this task.

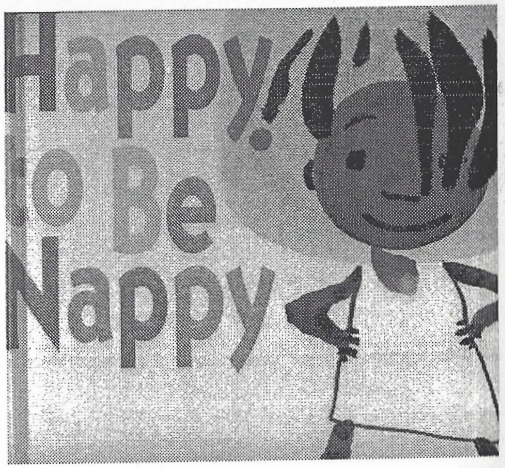


Figure 3: cover of Happy to Be Nappy

Speaking to this point, Rudine Sims Bishop's (1982) touchstone work *Shadow and Substance: Afro-American Experience in Contemporary Children's Fiction* discusses many books written and/or illustrated by white authors about African-Americans that were criticised as blatantly racist, or as falling short of presenting authentic depictions of Black life and culture. Many of the books attributed the latter shortcoming fall into a category that Sims Bishop refers to as 'melting pot books' (p. 33). These had the positive goal of recognising universality, but they ignored differences and '...without the illustrations one would have no way of knowing that the story was about an Afro-American child' (p. 33).[viii] Sims Bishop goes on to state the need for 'culturally conscious books' (p. 49), asserting, '...to ignore linguistic and sociocultural characteristics of a large group of children (African-Americans) may be another way of conferring a kind of invisibility on them,' (p. 46).

In her superb article, 'From Queer to Gay and Back Again: Young Adult Novels with Gay/Lesbian/Queer Content, 1969-1997' Christine Jenkins (1998) draws upon Sims Bishop's research to address concerns of authenticity. She states, 'Certainly authors

can write sympathetically, even empathetically, about characters who do not resemble themselves. But it can be difficult to capture the subtleties of culture, the nuances that convey the flavor of life from within a marginalised group. More difficult than details of food, language, and setting is seeing the story through the Other's eyes and sustaining the vision in the telling' (p. 319). Beginning with *Charlie Parker*, Raschka has proven to the vast majority of his critics, collaborators and audience that he can indeed sustain 'the vision in the telling' with the power and strength of a Dizzy Gillespie high note – though it is important to recognise that so far he has done so primarily through books without a narrative thrust. He instead conveys *aspects* of African-American culture through his books rather than telling a story that takes place within the culture – a snapshot rather than a movie, a culturally conscious vision rather than a culturally conscious tale. Perhaps this approach leaves less room for lapses, and it has certainly resulted in successful and celebrated works.

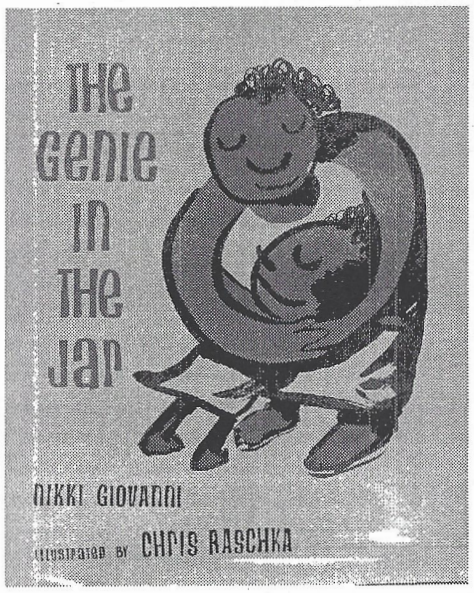


Figure 4: cover of Genie in the Jar

In fact, Nikki Giovanni was so impressed by *Charlie Parker*, she specifically requested Raschka as the illustrator[ix] for her Nina Simone tribute *Genie in the Jar*.[x] It is a stretch at best to classify Simone as a jazz artist and to therefore justify placing this book alongside Raschka's tributes to the music of Charlie Parker, Thelonious Monk, and John Coltrane. A musical child prodigy and classically trained musician, Simone wrote and performed songs that fall into and blend many different genres, including jazz. In her autobiography *I Put a Spell on You* Simone asserts, 'Calling me a jazz singer was a way of ignoring my musical background, because I didn't fit into white ideas of what a black performer should be' (1992). While taking this into consideration, I still believe that *The Genie in the Jar* deserves a place within Raschka's jazz ensemble of picture books, and it, more than any of Raschka's other musically-inspired picture books, recognises the power of culture behind artistry.

While never specifically naming Nina Simone in the text, nor depicting her in the illustrations, *The Genie in the Jar* embodies her central, artistic message of Black empowerment and resilience. Furthermore, the jacket's illustrator bio states, 'Raschka

prepared himself for illustrating *The Genie in the Jar* by listening to Nina Simone's singing,' and readers with exposure to her music can see how certain songs have found their way into his artwork. For example, Virginia A. Walters (1998) refers to the unnamed characters populating the pages of this picture book and notes that 'the child and the women are presented in many shades of brown, like the women in Nina Simone's own 'Four Women', one of Simone's most celebrated compositions, which gives voice to four African-American women of varying skin tones.

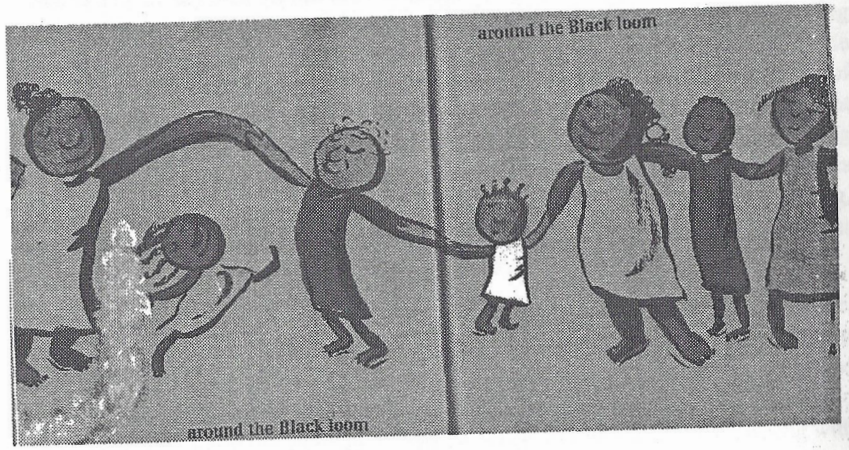


Figure 5: excerpt from Genie in the Jar

The jacket's illustrator bio also reveals that Raschka credits his choice of brown, Fabriano Ingres paper as the key to his artistic achievement in *The Genie in the Jar*. Rather than washing them out, or making it difficult to see their individual figures, the placement of the brown-skinned women and girls against brown and black paper backgrounds speaks to the strength that they find within their own community.[xi] They draw strength from being in their own element. Writing for *School Library Journal*, Kate McClelland states, 'Turning convention on its ear, the safe circle of black women is placed on a black background, while the warnings appear on white' (1996, p. 103), and in her book, *Radical Change: Books for Youth in the Digital Age*, Eliza T. Dresang (1999) reveals the further observations of a group of young readers who critiqued Giovanni and Raschka's book. After one student made the observation that: 'The backgrounds are black when Genie is safe and white when she is in danger', a student named Lisa interjected, 'But not totally white though...The white backgrounds have some little dark specks showing through. It's like African Americans in white society. It shows how even when white overpowers the darker color, the strength of the dark is still there' (1999, p. 81).

This quotation demonstrates Raschka's success in taking a highly metaphorical text and making it accessible while communicating a message of Black empowerment.

This message is forcefully concluded at book's end when the main girl character, empowered by the love and strengthened by the wisdom of her mother and their community of Black women and girls, embodies the hope of the 'sky wrapped around her' and is released like a genie from the jar symbolised by her mother's warm embrace. This powerful ending brings to mind another of Simone's most celebrated pieces, 'To Be Young, Gifted and Black,' which she wrote with Weldon Irvine as a homage to her friend, playwright Lorraine Hansberry.[xii] Along with 'Lift Every Voice and Sing'[xiii] it is regarded as an anthem of the African-American community with the compelling message, 'We must begin to tell our young/there's a world waiting for you/yours is the quest that's just begun' (Irvine). If in *Charlie Parker* Raschka succeeds in conveying the spirit of Parker's music, in *The Genie in the Jar* he and Giovanni capture the heart of Simone's artistry by evoking pride in African-American resilience, community, resistance and accomplishment, even though she and her works are never specifically mentioned or depicted.

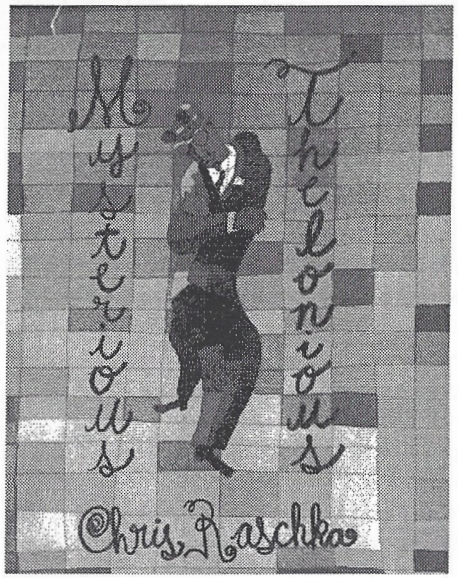


Figure 6: cover of Mysterious Thelonious

In contrast, Raschka's *Mysterious Thelonious* (1997), was explicitly inspired by Monk's composition, 'Misterioso', and revels in its specificity. Like *Charlie Parker* and *Genie*, this book emerges not as a biography of the profiled musician, but as a concept book on his music. In this case Raschka invites his readers/viewers into the workings of the mind of Monk's music. Speaking about creating this book, Raschka states:

> I went at it more formally by analyzing a particular piece of music and then transposing the notes and the harmonies into my own direct correspondence to the color wheel. So, there are 12 notes on a chromatic scale, and 12 color tones on a color wheel. I just placed one on top of the other and then faithfully rendered the piece 'Misterioso' into colors as I perceived it by listening to it over and over again (Davis 1998).

The result is a book with multiple layers of aesthetic and intellectual pleasure as readers are primarily invited to enjoy a rhythmic text recalling the jazzy, succinct words of *Charlie Parker Played Be Bop*, and free-wheeling, vibrant illustrations that underscore its central message that 'Jazz is the music of freedom' (Raschka,

Mysterious Thelonious, unpaginated).[xiv] Beyond this initial delight, those in Raschka's audience with formal musical knowledge 'can not only read it, but literally play it like a musical score' (*Publisher's Weekly* 1997, p. 74). Of course, the vast majority of readers (child or adult) will not be able to do so, and this signals Raschka's most assertive move toward broadening the audience for picture books as his complex techniques invite several levels of engagement.

This is not to say that *Mysterious Thelonious* is inaccessible to children; on the contrary, its colourful, playful illustrations and rhythmic text with the resounding message: 'He played not one wrong note, not one. / His piano had none, not one. / He played the music of freedom. / Jazz is the music of freedom.' has the same sort of appeal found in *Charlie Parker Played Be Bop*. However, critic Bill Ott worried that 'outright bafflement' might ensue for both children and adults encountering *Mysterious Thelonious*, and he wrote, 'today's picture book creators pick their topics based on their own interests, not those of kids…Charlie Parker, Louis Armstrong, and…Thelonious Monk are threatening to replace talking mice, rabbits and bears as the picture book heroes of choice,' (1997, p. 476).

Ott's implied assumptions that children are primarily interested in 'talking mice, rabbits and bears' and that jazz artists and music are (and should be) topics of interest for adults only leave little room for individual variances in taste among 'kids' and exclude the possibility that the interests of adult creators of children's books could coincide with those of the children in their audience. Furthermore, what's wrong with introducing children to jazz artists and music? Although he never professed to know anything about children's feelings about talking mice, rabbits and bears, in his glowing review of *Charlie Parker Played Be Bop*, Dizzy Gillespie could not have disagreed more with the idea that children would not be interested in picture books centering around jazz:

> [Raschka] writes like a musician, giving the feeling of the music through the rhythm of the language. Lots of words are there just for the sound of them -I ike 'reeti-footi, reeti-footi, ree!' It's like a nursery rhyme – and it's like 'scat' singing. You see: they're not so far apart. Children will understand (1992, p. 70).

Ott was actually among those who praised Raschka's work in *Charlie Parker*, and one can therefore assume that he agreed in some ways with Gillespie's statement. Furthermore, Ott did not give up on *Mysterious Thelonious* entirely, stating, 'Clearly this is a book to be 'taught' in some sort of jazz appreciation class or program, which can incorporate the 'no wrong notes' philosophy.' (1997, p. 476).

Alas, the inclusion of a feline friend, a cool cat if you will, in Raschka's latest addition to his jazz ensemble, *John Coltrane's Giant Steps*, does nothing to assuage Ott's concerns about the direction that his work takes in the jazz ensemble. In his scathing review for *Booklist* Ott contends that Raschka forgets his audience and writes, 'Sure, why not turn 'Giant Steps,' Coltrane's breakthrough composition, a nearly five-minute sheet of sound played at breakneck pace, into a sequence of watercolors that will

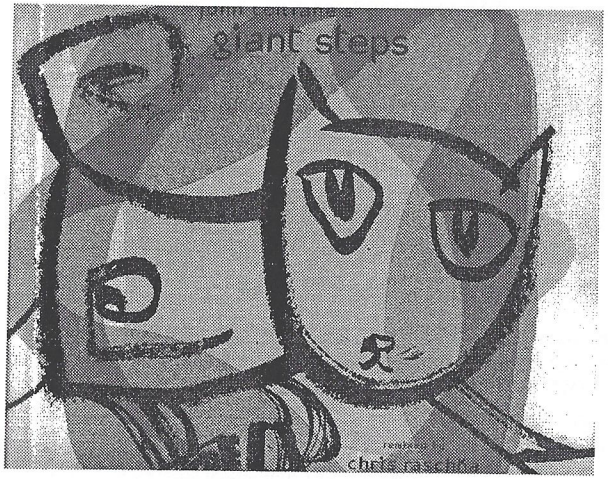


Figure 7: cover of John Coltrane's Giant Steps

teach kids what the innovative tenor sax player was all about? Children's imaginations are limitless, right? Not to mention the fact that Raschka's fans (adults, that is) seem willing to follow their pied piper anywhere, no questions asked' (2002, p. 1858).

This clever, deprecating designation of Raschka as pied piper plays on the classic tale's storyline of a piper who led children away from adults with music. Ott's contention seems to be that Raschka's picture books move adults away from children through jazz picture books. Are we, or *am I*, truly dazzled by Raschka's work in a way that leaves us/me out of touch with children's various needs, desires and voices? In a way that keeps me from asking questions? I hope not, and I think not; but here we arrive at that paradox of children's literature: *adults* write, illustrate, review, almost always purchase, and often present, children's books. Children themselves are at the end of the line in controlling and accessing 'their' literature. Perhaps it is too early for a serious Reader Response or Reception Theory study of *John Coltrane's Giant Steps*, or of Raschka's jazz ensemble as a whole; however, I can move into a discussion of this book's place within the ensemble while providing anecdotal evidence of its success.

With *Charlie*, *Genie*, and *Mysterious Thelonious*, Raschka gave readers the spirit, heart, and mind of the jazz music of three very different musicians, and in this newest work readers can see the workings of the body of a jazz piece in motion, with each distinct part working in concert with the rest to create Coltrane's famed 'sheets of sound.' Raschka opens this book with a narrator's voice that assumes the role of stage director, and he introduces the four characters, a raindrop, a snowflake, a box and a kitten who will work together to show the reader the distinct parts of Coltrane's music (bass, rhythm, harmony, melody) that create his sheets of sound. Commenting on Raschka's illustrations in *Giant Steps* a reviewer for the *Bulletin for the Center for Children's Books* writes, 'Watercolor is an ideal vehicle for conveying the complexity of the Coltrane sound, and translucent colors that first slosh together in awkward disarray later meld delicately into the harmony of the final take, tacitly directing novice jazz listeners to 'watch' for the logical thread within the dense knot of sound.

There's a powerful, if implicit message here: jazz is no cacophonous free-for-all, but an intricate, disciplined musical form' (2002, p. 4).

To arrive at this message Raschka creates a visual free-for-all of sorts when the kitten

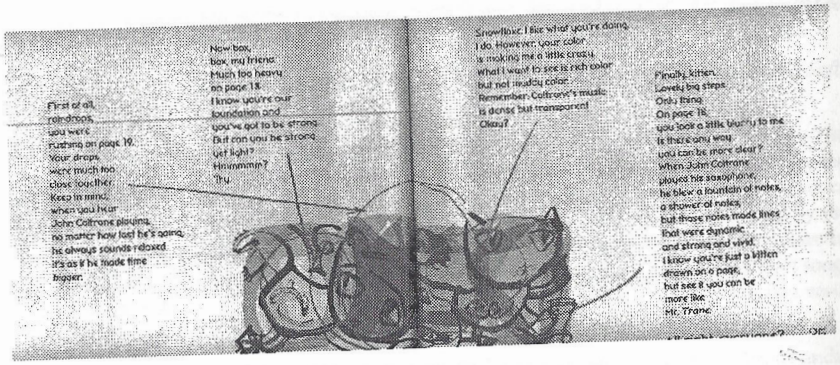


Figure 8: excerpt from John Coltrane's Giant Steps

takes steps that are just a bit too big, causing the entire picture to become a muddled mess. He then uses a central doublespread to show just where things went wrong. The sweeping arrows pointing out visual disconnects with the sound of Coltrane's music are reminiscent of a football coach's chalkboard game plan, and the narrator's voice humorously urges the kitten, raindrop, snowflake and box to change their visual interpretation of the sound of Coltrane's music with directives that describe the genius of his compositions. Bill Ott is not impressed; he writes:

> ...there is a two-page spread composed almost entirely of text. Forget 'Boomba boomba.' Raschka has ascended to the podium. Here are his instructions to the snowflake: 'Remember: Coltrane's music is dense but transparent. Okay?' No, not okay. Abstract language used to describe the performing arts rarely communicates much of anything (except perhaps pomposity), but in this case, it is laughably inappropriate. Just try explaining what 'dense but transparent' means to the picture-book crowd. (2002, p. 1858)

As luck would have it, I have done just this – not in a formal musical theory lesson, but in conversations during readings of *John Coltrane's Giant Steps* through my work in classrooms and in drop-in storytime sessions for The Eric Carle Museum of Picture Book Art. When reading this book to a group, I split the children into four parts and invite each section to create a sound reflecting one of the four images from the sheet of sound that Raschka illustrates in his picture book. This level of interaction allows children to hear, see, and feel the creation of a piece of music with four distinct parts as we talk about words like density and transparency. Do we end up sounding like a Coltrane composition? No. But, do the children reach book's end with the idea that Coltrane created complex music with interconnected parts that worked together? Yes.

If this message can be discerned by children, what is the harm to them or to children's literature at large? Bring on the talking mice, rabbits and bears in stampedes, but let's not limit ourselves to such content when there are worlds of possibility open to the picture book and its intended audience. Raschka has proven that one such world is the world of jazz music, with its roots in African American culture and its branches stretching out to anyone who wants to swing with its rhythms and delight in its innovative spirit.

Notes

[i] In fact, a reviewer for the *Horn Book Magazine* immediately recognised Raschka's talents and creative promise upon the publication of *Charlie Parker Played Be Bop* in 1992, calling it 'One of the most innovative picture books of recent time' (Watson 1993).

[ii] Numerous picture book artists, Eric Carle in *I See a Song* (1973), Rachel Isadora in *Ben's Trumpet* (1979) and Mordecai Gerstein in *What Charlie Heard* (2002), to name a few, have successfully translated sound into visual images.

[iii] Indeed, Raschka is quoted on the book's jacket saying that he wanted children to learn that '...Charlie Parker and be bop had something to do with rhythm, surprise, and humor.'

[iv] Writing about his creative process Raschka says, 'My overall approach to making a picture book is to endeavor to embody the theme of the book, its text and meaning, in the actual structure of the book. The illustrations are not to be seen as existing apart from the book. Everything must work toward enhancing the whole' (Raschka 1998, p.33).

[v] In this review Gillespie stated, 'We had a very close relationship, Bird and me-he was the other side of my heartbeat' (1992, p. 70).

[vi] Raschka echoed this storyline in his 1999 book, *Like, Likes, Like*, which emerges as a love story between two cats, one white and one brown. A critic for *The Horn Book Magazine* wrote, 'Its union of two different colors of feline harkens back to the friendship embarked upon by the two boys in *Yo! Yes?*' (C.M.H. 9/1/99). Writing for *Booklist*, critic Julie Cosaro stated, 'This deceptively simple picture book can be read as a meditation on race, though it certainly doesn't have to be,' (Cosaro 4/1/99). Digging into children's literature history, one can also see a link between *Like, Likes, Like* and Garth Williams's picture book, *The Rabbits' Wedding* (1958) in which a black and a white rabbit fall in love and get married. Seen as promoting miscegenation, this book 'caused an uproar,' in the words of children's literature historian, Leonard Marcus (1999, p. 132).

[vii] In 1999 Raschka was praised by the Horn Book Magazine for his illustrations in *Another Important Book* by, Margaret Wise Brown, in which he 'explicated the underlying complexity of Brown's simple-seeming statements in illustrations that pay deliberate tribute to her earlier illustrators. His graphic approach to form and composition recalls Weisgard's illustrations for *The Noisy Book*; his saturated palette echoes the tonal balance of Clement Hurd's Goodnight Moon; his vigorously drawn figures outdo Jean Charlot 's *A Child's Good Night Book*' (Long 1999, p. 593). Although other reviewers made note of his background research into these illustrators from the 1940s and '50s, none mentioned the fact that Raschka took the important step of presenting a truly diverse cast of child characters in his interpretation of Brown's text – an element that was certainly lacking in picture books published during Brown's era. Children of various races romp through Raschka's book, which consistently avoids tokenism and instead presents a truly multicultural vision.

[viii] For example, Sims Bishop highlights a controversial article by Ray Anthony Shepard (1971) published in the *Interracial Books for Children Bulletin* that 'compares Ezra Jack Keats's books unfavorably to those of John Steptoe...Shepard asserts that Keats creates kids who only look Black while, Steptoe's kids 'know what's happening" (1982, p. 45).

[ix] Giovanni's author bio on the jacket cover reads in part, 'Inspired to think of it [her poem] as a picture book., she requested the artist who had created *Charlie Parker Played Be Bop*.'

[x] This poem was originally published in Giovanni's collection of poetry entitled, *Spin a Soft, Black Song* (1971).

[xi] Virginia A. Walter's (1998) exquisite summary and celebration of *Genie* reads in part: '*The Genie in the Jar* celebrates the strength of the bonds between African-American women, the 'black loom' that ties them together and protects them from what is often a harsh world. Raschka has illustrated Giovanni's words by presenting a small African-American child encircled by the strong arms of African-American women who warn her of the dangers around her – 'careful baby don't prick your finger' – while giving her the freedom and security to sing her own song, woven from their own black loom and the blue of the sky…The pages of varying warm earth tones have textures that are as smooth and as rough as Simone's voice can be.'

[xii] Hansberry's (1989) autobiography, with notes by James Baldwin, would be published under this same title.

[xiii] This song was written by James Weldon Jackson and arranged by J. Rosamund Jackson.

[xiv] This line from Raschka's book recalls a quote from the legendary jazz musician, Duke Ellington, which Ken Burns used as the opening quote for his introduction to the book version of his film documentary, 'Jazz: The History of America's Music.' Ellington said, 'Put it this way. Jazz is a good barometer of freedom…In its beginnings, the United States of America spawned certain ideals of freedom and independence through which, eventually, jazz music was evolved, and the music is so free that many people say it is the only unhampered, unhindered expression of complete freedom yet produced in this country' (in Ward 2000, p. viii).

Primary Texts

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