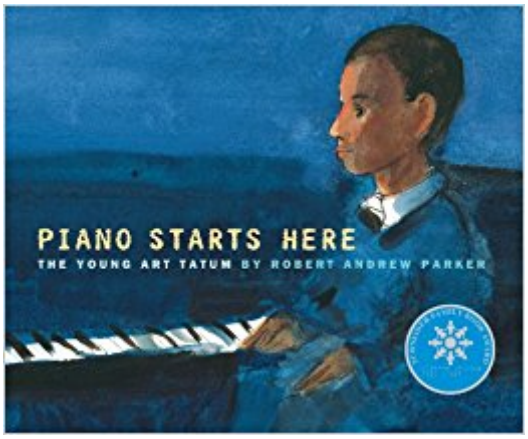
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Piano Starts Here: The Young Art Tatum



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Synopsis

Regardless of whether theyÃ¢â ¬â„¢ve heard of jazz or Art Tatum, young readers will appreciate how Parker uses simple, lyrical storytelling and colorful, energetic ink-and-wash illustrations to show the world as young Art Tatum might have seen it. Tatum came from modest beginnings and was nearly blind, but his passion for the piano and his acute memory for any sound that he heard drove him to become a virtuoso who was revered by both classical and jazz pianists alike. Included in the back matter is a biography and bibliography.

Book Information

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Age Range: 4 - 8 years

Grade Level: Preschool - 3

Customer Reviews

Starred Review Parker, who illustrated Jan Greenberg and Sandra JordanÃ¢â ¬â„¢s Sibert Honor Book Action Jackson (2002), contributes both words and pictures in this heartfelt portrait of jazz great Tatum. Parker pushes the limits of the bookÃ¢â ¬â„¢s nonfiction cataloguing by speaking in the pianistÃ¢â ¬â„¢sÃ Â first-person voice, but an authorÃ¢â ¬â„¢s note and a solid bibliography set the episodes in a framework of established facts. The vibrant scenes, in ParkerÃ¢â ¬â„¢s familiar style of scratched ink lines and watercolor washes, show young Tatum playing at home for his dancing parents, at church for a full choir, and at local clubs, where he is discovered and his international career begins. In some images, crowds of dancers and musicians create a swirl of

animated motion; in others, Parker sets Tatum, who was nearly blind, against a deep, moody, abstract background of shifting colors. Throughout, the simple, direct language shows the power of the music for both Tatum and his listeners. Ã¢â ¬Å“When I am at the piano . . . I play clouds of notes, rivers of notes . . . I forget that my eyes arenÃ¢â ¬â„¢t good. I have everything I need.Ã¢â ¬Â• Cue up the music; children will best appreciate this beautiful tribute with an earful of Tatum at the keyboard. Grades 2-4. --Gillian Engberg

Starred review, Kirkus Reviews, December 15, 2007:Ã¢â ¬Å“Fusing ParkerÃ¢â ¬â„¢s artistic talent and passion for jazz (heÃ¢â ¬â„¢s a musician, too), this sensitively embellished biography is totally on time.Ã¢â ¬Â•Starred review, Booklist, February 2, 2008:Ã¢â ¬Å“The simple, direct language shows the power of the music for both Tatum and his listeners.Ã¢â ¬Â•Starred review, School Library Journal, February 2008:Ã¢â ¬Å“Breathing life into words about music for young children is never easy, but Parker makes it appear effortless.Ã¢â ¬Â•Review, The San Francisco Chronicle, February 24, 2008:"It’s a joyful portrait of an innovative artist who was peerless in music ... A jazz musician himself, Parker brings a deep love and understanding to his subject."

Our 6 year has been taking piano for several years now. We bought this book to inspire her and it’s wonderful. It is about Art Tatum and it is descriptive and engaging to our daughter. The illustrations are lovely!

Would have liked more of a story about his life rather than cartoons. Hard to read as print was very small.

Informative as well as enjoyable. I will certainly share this book with my piano students. His story is an inspiration to us all whether one is a musician or not.

The story of Art Tatum has been told too rarely -- it’s a delight to have this wonderful book written by an impassioned author. Even more amazing is the gorgeous artwork, also done by Mr. Parker. Strongly recommended.

My eleven year old grandaughter liked this because she takes piano. Liked the fact that it was a true story.

Art Tatum was a little boy born in Toledo. His father was a mechanic and his mother, who loved to sing in church, did a lot of cleaning. His mother played the piano, but mostly it sat "quietly in the corner," until one day he became tall enough to hit the keys on the keyboard. He banged at it, played with one finger, two fingers and before you could wink an eye it started to sound very good. Even his mother said it did. He loved to play on the piano and didn't care much about night or day and because his eyes were so bad he really couldn't tell the difference."Don't wear out that piano today," his father said to him before he left for work. Art just loved his piano. By the time he was ten he was asked to play in church. A little case of jitters immediately went away when he touched the keyboard. Later he was asked to play at the YMCA, then at a bake sale and even someone's birthday party. "My, my, isn't he something," his mother gushed. More and more he was asked to play until he became famous, but he still remembered and loved "all the people who helped" him.This was a wonderful story. It was written in a gentle, sing song tone and was quite inspiring. The watercolors meshed quite well with the text. In the back of the book Robert Andrew Parker writes about actually meeting and listening to Art play. There is a brief, but very interesting biography of art and a bibliography. This book would be very appealing to any jazz fan and will be appreciated and loved even by those unacquainted with his work.

Beautiful book, well written and illustrations are fabulous. Love the way it focuses on his childhood. Moved me to tears.

Excellent biography of Art Tatum as a child -- he was an incredible jazz pianist who began at a very early age. Reinforces the values of practice and modesty. Great illustrations.Play his music while you read this with your children. Wow!

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