

BOOK REVIEWS

Ruth Hamm, Editor

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THE MOZART EFFECT

by Don Campbell

Avon Books. \$24.00

Recently, headlines have announced the effect on spatial intelligence of listening to Mozart. Other studies have indicated a dramatic correlation between musical study and SAT scores. *The Mozart Effect* takes a closer look at these findings as well as examining research and anecdotal stories of the influence of all musical styles on intelligence, health, healing and creativity. If you are seeking to exalt classical music, it is here exalted. However, don't expect any musical style to be vilified because profound purpose is found for every genre.

Campbell and his sources from the fields of medicine, psychology, education and music speculate on the processes by which music affects brain activity and other physical response. Though diverse issues are addressed, this is primarily a book of alternative medicine. If you are highly conservative and put all your faith in traditional Western medicine alone, then go take an aspirin and read no further. If you alternate sessions with your medium and your Reiki practitioner, pour yourself another cup of ginseng tea and meet your new bible. However, if you are a cautious person who believes that this universe is both material and mystical, then this book offers you the opportunity for unique exploration into your own mind and heart.

Campbell describes his quest for understanding the power of music, beginning with the studies of French physician Dr. Alfred Tomatis. Tomatis believed that the root of most vocal and hearing problems lay in listening disabilities. At Tomatis listening centers throughout the world, clients are trained to listen through the use of filtered recordings of music and the human

voice. These recordings, with low frequencies removed, recreate the listening environment of the womb.

Campbell's prescriptions for full human development begin in the womb, recommending that parents talk and sing and play music for their unborn child. Then, continuing life's journey, Campbell goes on to examine ways to improve the quality of daily living — coping with pain and stress as well as discovering new wells of energy and opening creative pathways through recommended listening selections and "toning," a technique of vocalizing on a vowel for extended periods which is found in diverse cultures. Personal testimonials are given on musical miracles for problems from abrasions to writer's block. These stories are occasionally ones of cure, but are more often ones of comfort.

Accompanying these witnesses to the power of sound are suggestions for readers to initiate their own journeys of discovery. If you are looking for a book of formulas for every ill, you will be disappointed. Though specific music is sometimes recommended, the hard work of matching tone or composition to complaint is the responsibility of the individual. Ultimately, this is a book about knowing yourself and taking control of your own well-being.

Finally, music is offered as the bridge between life and death, creating an environment for the dying and the bereaved that brings comfort in this final transition. It is a remarkable adventure from birth to death, and *The Mozart Effect* is a source of empowerment to make this a journey of wholeness.

-Marilyn A. Gunn, Missouri

CHARLIE PARKER PLAYED BE BOP

by Chris Raschka.

Orchard Books. \$5.95 paperback

MYSTERIOUS THELONIOUS

by Chris Raschka.

Orchard Books. \$13.95

For those teachers who include the dimension of sight with the world of sound in their music classes, Chris Raschka offers a pair of picture books that vividly interpret the art of jazz.

Charlie Parker Played Be Bop takes you on a visual journey, led by a dancing shoe, through a world of jazz. The whimsical water color paintings with swinging lollipops and baby chickadees fully express the joy of sound and motion. There is no story *per se*, but rather a recurring theme accentuated by delicious rhythmic riffs which are rich with the flavor of be bop — bold, humorous, and constantly on-the-move. It is a delight to read aloud, wrapping your tongue around rapid-fire words as if your mouth were part of a marvelous dance.

Mr. Raschka created this book as response to a performance of Parker's "Night in Tunisia." It is a fine linguistic/artistic interpretation of the work. You will recognize in the language the rhythms of Tunisia, but it is not a syllable-by-syllable copy, thereby saving you from the curse of the recollection of cheesy lyrics every time you hear the work. Your youngest students will be in giggles over the words and images. By third or fourth grade, however, many of your children may be so concerned over the absence of plot that they can't enjoy the sounds and images just for their pure pleasure.

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"This is the story about Thelonious Monk and his music," writes Raschka in *Mysterious Thelonious*. "There were no wrong notes on his piano." Raschka has assigned the twelve notes of the chromatic scale to the twelve color values of the color wheel. If "Misterioso" by Monk were a painting, what would it look like? This is the question Raschka asked himself, and *Mysterious Thelonious* is the answer.

When you first pick up this book, don't even try to read it. Just enjoy the jazz spectrum and see the language as part of the artistic image. The words are written in broken contour and are quite difficult to manage the first time around, but with practice, the book is a delight to read, as you allow your speaking voice to follow the contour of the written words. Against your own will, you will likely find yourself reading faster and faster at higher pitch and with greater intensity until you come to the resolution of the final page.

Raschka not only captures the colors of tone and the sense of moving toward a climax, he cleverly uses space and absence of color to create visual interest. It is perhaps one of the most difficult lessons in the music class—the importance of silence. Raschka allows us to see the silence. Though my older students tended to reject the absence of plot in the Parker book, they seemed undisturbed by its lack in *Mysterious Thelonious*. Rather than seeing it as a story book, they tended to view it as a picture of music. *Mysterious Thelonious* will inspire students of any age to create their own works of musical art.

-Marilyn A. Gunn, Missouri

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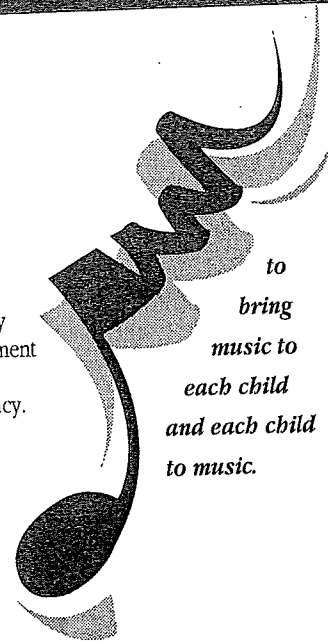
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bring
music to
each child
and each child
to music.

Letters to the Editor

Did you find something you read in *The Orff Echo* to be particularly helpful or stimulating? Do you have a question you'd like answered? Have you disagreed with something you've read on these pages? Is there some area of music and movement education—or education in general—that you'd like to see addressed in *The Orff Echo*? If so, the Editorial Board of *The Orff Echo* would like to hear from you. Please send your letters to *The Orff Echo*, 3105 Lincoln Blvd., Cleveland, OH 44118, or FAX them to (216) 321-1946. You can reach us by E-mail at BXFN94B@PRODIGY.COM