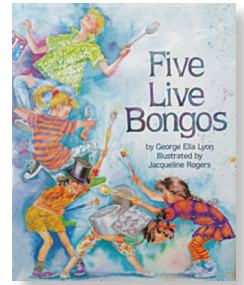


## Five Live Bongos

By George Ella Lyon, illustrated by Jacqueline Rogers  
Scholastic, 1994



This lively, energetic book nearly falls off the library shelf and into your lap. Those who join into this found-sound band adventure will find a satisfying treat. Similar to Peter Spier's *Crash! Bang! Boom!* published by Doubleday, it seeks delight in household sounds.

*Five Live Bongos* is a story of a day in a family's life. Dad, a painter, is trying his best to encourage his five children to share quietly in his profession. Soon enough, the children burst away from their painting endeavors and make some noise. Taking Dad's paintbrushes along with them, they take over the kitchen. Each child pretends to be a part of a percussion ensemble as they drum on bread pans, skillets, pot lids, and everything else they can find. Mom can't think at the computer, the family dog covers his ears with his paws, and the cat hides behind the fishbowl. The children dance from one room to the next, becoming more raucous in each space.

Soon enough, the parents stand their ground and bring an end to the found-sound party by suggesting that the children move to the garage. The parents refocus the exuberant chaos of their children by instructing them to

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build their own drum set. The children go treasure hunting at the dump. It ends with a scene of the children enjoying their newly built artistic creation while all the neighbors wear earphones.

George Ella Lyon is a writer, poet, and teacher with a fascination with words. There is a frenetic quality to the text, as if, in the rush of a brainstorm, one brings together seemingly disconnected ideas. The language of the book starts in prose but soon takes on the rhymes and percussiveness of sound: "The brushes they wanted were the ones that shazz a snare drum." It exalts the joys of experimentation and discovery. Lyon experiments with the sounds of words: "BANG CRASH ARTICHOKE! RATTA-TATTA

CHINK!" Aspects of timbre are shown as they explore the sounds of many items. It returns to prose as the parents call out, "STOP!!!"

Gaps and skips in the story are smoothed over by its visuals. Jacqueline Rogers's detailed watercolors and drawings complement the text well. The five children are reintroduced as their musical selves as the five bongos. The children transform their surroundings from blues to pinks, purples, yellows, and oranges as they parade around the house and travel to the dump. Drawings often frame the text and serve as mood-changers to the story.

The five children are an enthusiastic team, full of love and respect for each other. Each page is full of images that reflect a family cohesion. Even the parents, though frazzled by all the uproar, are shown as united in disciplining the children by redirecting their creative drive.

*Five Live Bongos* is a wonderful read for those who enjoy an engaging combination of text, music, and art. ■

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