

# This Jazz Man

By Karen Ehrhardt; illustrations by R. G. Roth  
Published by Harcourt, Inc.; 2006



Reviewed by  
Fauna Sigman

**T**his *Jazz Man* is a swinging version of the folk song favorite “This Old Man.” Its brightly colored artwork by R. G. Roth is visually exciting and sure to appeal to children. Each two-page spread features a famous jazz musician playing a different instrument. For example, number six introduces drummer Art Blakey: “This Jazz man, he plays six / He plays solos with his sticks / With a Bomp-bomp! Bubbuda-bomp! / Give the man a hand / This Jazz man beats with the band.” The last few pages that make up number ten bring all the musicians together to make “one great band.”

The rhyme scheme is accurate with the original song, and it is made more interesting by the inclusion of scat style syllables representing the sound each instrument or musician makes. For example, in the number seven, Dizzy Gillespie plays notes that “rise to heaven.” In the illustration, the words rising out of his trumpet blare, “Doodly-doodly-doot-doot-doot! Toot-toot!” What a fun way for young children to try out the sounds of nonsense syllables and to be introduced to scat singing and improvisation. Movement ideas are also suggested on some pages. Who wouldn’t want to “Shuffle-step! Shim-sham! Hop-step-slide” with Bill “Bojangles” Robinson as he “plays two?”

Each turn of a page is an adventure in a collage style of art that is easily accessible to young people. On these lively pages, children are introduced to jazz instruments; a playful representation of each of the jazz artists

that are featured in the book. Searching for a curious little mouse who makes a “Where’s Waldo?” type of appearance in each two-page spread leads the eye to discover many informative details, supplementing the text, and proving that a picture can be worth a thousand words.

At the back of the book are short biographies about each of the musicians featured in the book, including Louis “Satchmo” Armstrong, Bill “Bojangles” Robinson, Luciano “Chano” Pozo y Gonzalez, Edward Kennedy “Duke” Ellington, Charlie “Bird” Parker, Art “Bu” Blakey, John Birks “Dizzy” Gillespie, Thomas Wright “Fats” Waller, and Charles “Baron” Mingus. These brief biographies offer a great musical connection with Black History Month in February. While the book does not include a CD, it would make an excellent platform for a listening lesson if excerpts of each musician’s music were compiled to accompany

the book. *This Jazz Man* creates a natural connection to jazz music and musicians that will certainly be enjoyed by students across multiple age levels.

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