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Dizzy Gillespie And The Birth Of Bebop



Synopsis

A biography of jazz great Dizzy Gillespie traces his early life and examines his innovative contributions in the field of modern music.

Book Information

Age Range: 12 and up

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Customer Reviews

Grade 7 Up?This biography examines the king of bebop's background as well as his impact on society and music, and successfully describes his struggle to create his own style. The narrative is filled with musical criticism and discussions of styles prevalent at the time. Gourse portrays Gillespie as a brave innovator whose abilities and kind personality appealed to many people. She seems to be intimately familiar with her subject and includes many quotations, but sources are not noted. Information is discussed thoroughly, but because of the amount of detail and number of names included, the book will appeal most to readers who have some background knowledge of music or interest in jazz. Two sections of good-quality, black-and-white photographs are included, and a short list of suggested listening follows the text. A solid addition for libraries that do not own Tony Gentry's *Dizzy Gillespie* (Chelsea, 1994).?Robin Works Davis, Hurst Public Library, TXCopyright 1995 Reed Business Information, Inc.

Gr. 6-10. This splendid biography is the rags-to-riches story of a great American musician, teacher, and innovator who stretched the limits of jazz far beyond its boundaries. Gillespie's musical genius and lively personality were evident in his early childhood, and the barriers of poverty and prejudice

did not prevent him from realizing his dreams. When he died in 1993, musicians and world dignitaries attended his New Orleans jazz-style funeral in New York. Gourse tells the up-and-down story of Dizzy's life, citing instances of Dizzy's problems not only with his hot temper, but also with his ability to avoid the drug and alcohol addictions that plagued many of the musicians in his circle. The author also tells a fascinating history of bebop's development and creates a picture of Gillespie's contributions to the civil rights movement in the U.S. Dizzy Gillespie's legacy lives on both in his music and in the many young musicians he taught and nurtured. Gourse's well-written account will enrich young readers interested in music, American history, and biography. Merri Monks

Thoroughly enjoyed reading "Dizzy Gillespie and the Birth of Bebop" - learned so much that I actually structured an internet streamed radio show around the information in the book. Anyone who knows anything about jazz knows that Dizzy was perhaps the most colorful character in jazz history and this book, while written at the junior high/high school reader level is worth the read at any age. The title suggests that Dizzy invented Bebop but the "tour de force" of Charlie Parker & Dizzy Gillespie was a key element, not to mention all the band leaders that recognized the Gillespie talent for composing and arranging and gave his material a chance even before Dizzy emerged as the king of bop. Dizzy certainly experimented and encouraged bop more than any other jazz player of his time. The book is well worth the read. Highly recommended.

My only criticism of this appealing book is that it skirts the issue of Gillespie's having fathered and supported an out-of-wedlock child; singer Jeanie Bryson. Ms.Gourse fudges, "Dizzy and (his wife) Lorraine had no children." Quite right, but even in a book for young readers, there is room for a little candor. Diz was a great musician, not a saint. Those who insist on portraying him as one have their work cut out for them. I hope to find this and other books about our heroes in the section marked "biography", not filed under "mythology". Oh, and as for drug use, Dizzy did his share, but his shrewd instincts for self-preservation kept him from the self-destructive excesses of, say, a Charlie Parker. His spectacular story needs to be told, with all its complexity and contradictions.

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