



Piano Starts Here: The Young Art Tatum

By Robert A. Parker

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Regardless of whether they'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.

From the Hardcover edition.

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Piano Starts Here: The Young Art Tatum By Robert A. Parker Bibliography

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Editorial Review

From [Booklist](#)

Starred Review Parker, who illustrated Jan Greenberg and Sandra Jordan'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 book's nonfiction cataloging by speaking in the pianist's first-person voice, but an author's note and a solid bibliography set the episodes in a framework of established facts. The vibrant scenes, in Parker'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. "When I am at the piano . . . I play clouds of notes, rivers of notes . . . I forget that my eyes aren't good. I have everything I need." Cue up the music; children will best appreciate this beautiful tribute with an earful of Tatum at the keyboard. Grades 2-4. --Gillian Engberg

Review

Starred review, [Kirkus Reviews](#), December 15, 2007:

"Fusing Parker's artistic talent and passion for jazz (he's a musician, too), this sensitively embellished biography is totally on time."

Starred review, [Booklist](#), February 2, 2008:

"The simple, direct language shows the power of the music for both Tatum and his listeners."

Starred review, [School Library Journal](#), February 2008:

"Breathing life into words about music for young children is never easy, but Parker makes it appear effortless."

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."

About the Author

Robert Andrew Parker has illustrated numerous acclaimed books for children, including the Caldecott Honor Book *Popcorn and Ma Goodness* by Edna Mitchell Preston, the *Boston Globe-Horn Book* Award winner *Cold Feet* by Cynthia DeFelice, and *Action Jackson* by Jan Greenberg and Sandra Jordan, which received six starred reviews and was named a Robert F. Sibert Honor Book. Mr. Parker is a jazz musician. He lives in West Cornwall, Connecticut.

From the Hardcover edition.

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Willie Wilson:

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Rose Ibarra:

Exactly why? Because this Piano Starts Here: The Young Art Tatum is an unordinary book that the inside of the guide waiting for you to snap the idea but latter it will shock you with the secret that inside. Reading this book next to it was fantastic author who write the book in such wonderful way makes the content inside easier to understand, entertaining technique but still convey the meaning entirely. So , it is good for you because of not hesitating having this ever again or you going to regret it. This excellent book will give you a lot of gains than the other book possess such as help improving your skill and your critical thinking approach. So , still want to delay having that book? If I had been you I will go to the reserve store hurriedly.

Dianne Janelle:

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Shelly Reder:

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