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## Bird & Diz



## Synopsis

An award-winning author and a Caldecott Medalist improvise a playful tribute to the creators of bebop—Charlie Parker and Dizzy Gillespie. When sax player Charlie "Bird" Parker and trumpeter John "Dizzy" Gillespie make music together, they toss notes back and forth like a game of tag and chase each other with sounds. As Dizzy's cheeks puff out like a frog with glasses, the two friends beep and bop and push each other to create a new kind of music—a thrilling fast jazz full of surprises. Blending a playful, rhythmic narration with expressive illustrations as fluid and dynamic as their subjects, this tribute to the masters of bebop by acclaimed biographer Gary Golio and beloved artist Ed Young will have readers hankering to listen for themselves.

## Book Information

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Average Customer Review: 5.0 out of 5 stars 4 customer reviews

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Age Range: 4 - 8 years

Grade Level: Preschool - 3

## Customer Reviews

Gr 3 Up—This book's capable creators capture the flavor of "Salt Peanuts," a bebop classic associated with Charlie "Bird" Parker and Dizzy Gillespie. Golio has previously tackled the challenge of using words to present musicians as diverse as Jimi Hendrix, Bob Dylan, and John Coltrane. The free verse is arranged to conjure speed and playfulness, and the imagery is amusing, i.e., Dizzy's puffy cheeks are compared to a frog's. The performance is presented as a game: "They take turns, tossing notes back and forth like jugglers, or play at the same time, Two hearts—one heartbeat." As they race to the finale, "Bird keeps flying, and Dizzy—well, he's just plain dizzy! They'll never catch each other, but that's the point." The ever-experimental

Young uses gouache and bursts of orange and pink pastel strokes to form Gillespie and his hot trumpet, whereas Coltrane's saxophone sounds are rendered in greens and blues. The golden brown paper is a subtle nod to the song's title and an effective foil for the color. Accordion pages pull out into a long spread, with the first side establishing the performers and their relationship. A river of ink on the water-repellant paper forms a beaded curvy line—the music pulsing across the gutters, climaxing in a rainbow of percussion. On the reverse, the letters of "bebop" blast out, morphing into frolicking abstractions. A brief afterword creates a context for bebop and encourages listening. It also admonishes readers to "pick up your crayons and draw!" That charge will be irresistible.

—Wendy Lukehart, District of Columbia Public Library

The book's language and images are every bit as vibrant as the music they celebrate.

—Publishers Weekly (starred review)

The free verse is arranged to conjure speed and playfulness, and the imagery is amusing, i.e., Dizzy's puffy cheeks are compared to a frog's. ... The ever-experimental Young uses gouache and bursts of orange and pink pastel strokes to form Gillespie and his hot trumpet, whereas Parker's saxophone sounds are rendered in greens and blues. ... Irresistible.

—School Library Journal (starred review)

Exuberant and gorgeous—like the music.

—Kirkus Reviews

An impressionistic story of a "be-bop-a-skoodley" friendship comes together in the juxtaposition of a series of opposites—rendering and abstraction, saturation and resistance, darkness and light—reflecting the special partnership of two distinct musical legends.... The resulting combination of words and imagery introduces the unique players and captures the controlled, explosive frenzy of their musical collaboration.

—Horn Book

Bebop has never been so beautiful.

—BookPage

Like saxophonist Parker and trumpeter Gillespie, author Golio and illustrator Young are each acclaimed artists in their own right. By bringing together their individual forms and styles of artistic expression, however, they contribute equally to the creation of a product with its unique meaning and synergy.

—Literacy Daily

This could indeed be an inspiring impetus for an artistic enterprise, but it's also an informative introduction to two jazz greats.

—Bulletin of the Center for Children's Books

I saw a copy of this at the library before I bought it, so I knew exactly what I was getting. The artwork is really cool, and I like the way the pages fold out. One of the first pages has "salt peanuts" written on it, which I think is neat, and there is a small biography about Bird and Diz in the back. I think it's a great way to introduce my youngster to the title artists.

Great book for the music classroom and library for Black History Month. Loved the concept of this well-written book.

In *Bird and Diz* Gary Golio captures the unique give-and-take, call-and-response, central to jazz giants Charlie Parker and Dizzy Gillespie and simultaneously likens it to the back-and-forth in children's play, like a rousing game of tag. In his delightful story, he echoes this legendary bebop duo in dualities of theme and structure, making concrete for children the sound and speed, the melody and rhythm, as well as the comedic and the kinetic. Ed Young brilliantly complements the story in line and color, with lyrical, racing, colorful illustrations. Best of all, the book itself is kinetic—the pages unfold like a giant accordion, making for a dynamic, absorbing activity for children while they read or listen to the story. This is a book to be enjoyed by children and adults alike.

Trying to write about music is an almost impossible task. but Golio and Young have pulled it off. Not going for the obvious of merely telling a story, Golio has instead recreated in words the feeling that you get when you listen to - and maybe even play - the Bebop created by Charlie Parker and Dizzy Gillespie. The back and forth, the reaching for new heights, the attempt to outdo while also supporting the other. With Ed Young's illustrations carrying the words along, the two musicians Bird and Diz are recreated on the page, or at least the feel of their music is. It's something new and exhilarating, and leaves the reader breathless and yet wanting more. A fascinating way to write about and depict any work of art, A very good job.

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