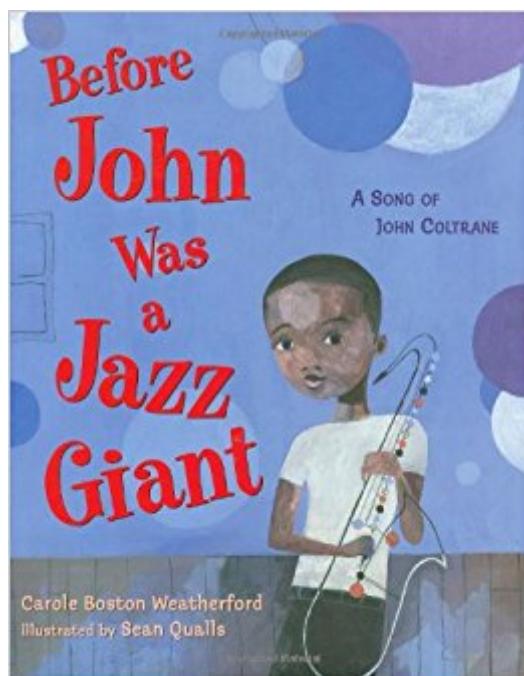


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# Before John Was A Jazz Giant: A Song Of John Coltrane



## Synopsis

Young John Coltrane was all ears. And there was a lot to hear growing up in the South in the 1930s: preachers praying, music on the radio, the bustling of the household. These vivid noises shaped John's own sound as a musician. Carole Boston Weatherford and Sean Qualls have composed an amazingly rich hymn to the childhood of jazz legend John Coltrane. *Before John Was a Jazz Giant* is a 2009 Coretta Scott King Illustrator Honor Book and a 2009 Bank Street - Best Children's Book of the Year.

## Book Information

Lexile Measure: 1090L (What's this?)

Hardcover: 32 pages

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Product Dimensions: 8.5 x 8.6 x 258.6 inches

Shipping Weight: 10.4 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.6 out of 5 stars 15 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #259,014 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #10 in Books > Children's Books > Arts, Music & Photography > Music > Jazz #67 in Books > Children's Books > Biographies > Performing Arts #70 in Books > Children's Books > Biographies > Musical

Age Range: 5 - 9 years

Grade Level: Kindergarten - 4

## Customer Reviews

Weatherford's evocative poem traces Coltrane's influences simply and stunningly. Qualls's muted palette of rich hues suggests the smoky jazz moods he would create. Even children who are unfamiliar with jazz in general and John Coltrane in particular may find their interest piqued. *Will echo with contemporary children, who will recognize the music in their daily lives.* This is as much a subtle invitation for children to listen to their own worlds as it is a Coltrane biography. *Booklist* This is as much a subtle invitation for children to listen to their own worlds as it is a Coltrane biography. *Bulletin of the Center for Children's Books*

CAROLE BOSTON WEATHERFORD wrote the Caldecott Honor book *Moses: When Harriet*

Tubman Lead Her People to Freedom. She lives in North Carolina. SEAN QUALLS illustrated the widely acclaimed biographies The Poet Slave of Cuba and Dizzy. He lives with his family in Brooklyn, New York.

Before John Was a Jazz Giant is a cute children's book about a musician named John Coltrane. The illustrations contain vivid blues, reds, and swirls that make the reader feel the music. The story tells all about the sounds of John's childhood and how they inspired him to write music. I really like how the author connected common household sounds such as hambones knocking in pots or the birds warbling to sounds of music. When he picked up the horn he flowed with sounds he was familiar with and created new songs. In the end we find out John Coltrane was all ears before he was a musician. I recommend this book for at home as well as in the classroom.

I really enjoyed this book and so did my son. I am a fan of Coltrane's music and my 5 year old son gets to listen to it as well. Now he gets a chance to hear the story of one of the musicians mom and dad listen's too often.

Thanks!

Lovely book!

Great!

When John Coltrane was a boy and way before he became famous he heard musical sounds coming from his own house. He listened to "hambones knocking in Grandma's pots, Daddy strumming the ukelele, and Mama cranking the phonograph." These weren't jazz sounds, but may well have been the kinds of sounds that John later tuned into those tunes that made him a jazz giant. Sounds whirled around him and he listened."Before John was a jazz giant, he heard big bands on the radio and a saxophone's soulful solo, blue notes crooning his name." Sean Qualls's soulful and thoughtful artwork, especially the wide-eyed depiction of Coltrane as a boy, brings a lot to the poetic tale. In the back, under the Author's Note, there is a clear, concise mini biography of John Coltrane, a revolutionary jazz composer and saxophonist. There are additional musical and book recommendations. A combination lesson of 'listen and learn' after reading this book would be a fun classroom activity!

I thought this book was alright. The pictures were appealing in that they looked real life forms. I like how book mentions John growing up and heard the everyday noises which triggered his notion of a jazz figure. Music is a beautiful piece of art, Whether it be people laughing or pots and spoons clacking together, John was able to identify and use the typical everyday noises as a future Jazz musician. Jazz is not my genre of music choice but reading the book makes you feel the sounds and beats of Jazz with the poetry detail. Young children are not keen on jazz music but I believe this could be a lesson for a piece of jazz history and of John Coltrane.

Greatness just appears - or so it seems... An awe-struck world may stop in disbelief at the existence of a genius. However, the genius knows. Stopping is the last thing one should ever do. Always moving, geniuses do not just pop out of thin air. They study, and they learn; they create themselves. The world is full of mundane things. Kitchen pots clang. Trains whistle. People laugh, and they cry. Beauty is difficult to hear. However, the genius is "all ears." Open this book. Pulsing brilliance will pour forth - filling your world, your breath. Alliteration, rhythm, and illustration unite into mastery. You will hear and see music. Art does travel a long way. Suddenly though, it appears, and the ordinary becomes a greatness never heard before. Look. Listen. John Coltrane is alive.

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