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**John Coltrane's Giant Steps**
Chris Raschka
Live Oak Media
978-0-87499-973-0
(August 31, 2001)

Sitting in the audience listening to the performers limbering up before a concert can cause a listener great excitement and anticipation. Especially when the performers are a snowflake, a box, some raindrops, and a kitten.

The author (a writer, illustrator, and musician) has devised an interdisciplinary approach to recreating legendary tenor soloist John Coltrane's musical composition, Giant Steps. Performed in 1958, Giant Steps became an influential session in jazz history. Coltrane's music is described as swirling, leaping, tumbling "sheets of sound." Each instrument is transformed into physical matter: cymbals are raindrops; the bass becomes a box; the piano appears as a snowflake; and the saxophone is a kitten. With each sound, the music builds upon itself, beginning with a tempo, to a bass foundation, framed with harmony, and topped off with a melody to create transparent sheets of color and sound.

The performers get carried away with Coltrane's music and are quickly reined in by the narrator, who reviews the movements and talks about where things went wrong. A lesson in music composition is simply outlined and the readers and listeners are given a sense of how important the musical directions of tempo, melody, and harmony can be.

Raschka has written and illustrated several picture books inspired by jazz masters, like Charlie Parker Played Be Bop and Mysterious Thelonius. Here, each illustration recreates the jazz music with text and transparent brushstrokes. The audiocassette gives additional information about Coltrane's contributions to jazz as a musician. A timeline, with other musicians and movements in music, would have provided additional understanding of Coltrane's accomplishments. Without the audio portion of the book, the illustrations may not hold the attention of a young reader, yet with the combination of the music and illustrations, the strength and importance of jazz music plays loud and clear.

*Suzanne Wilson*