

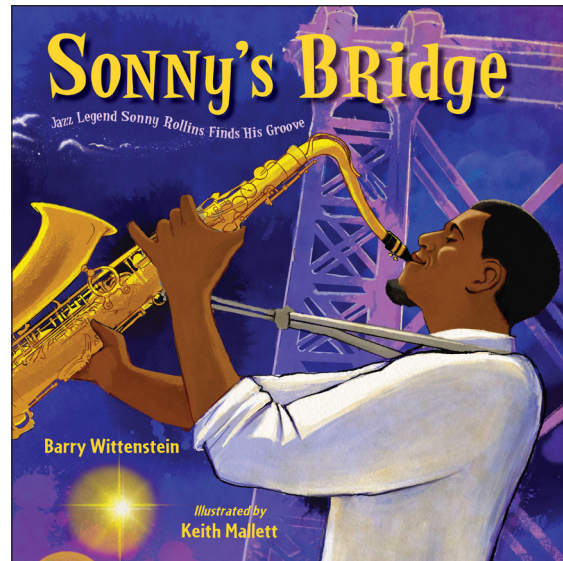
Sonny's BRIDGE

Jazz Legend Sonny Rollins Finds His Groove

ACTIVITY GUIDE

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Praise for *Sonny's Bridge*

"[I]mpresses from the endpapers . . . to the liner notes. . . . Opens the door for further exploration of both man and music."

— *Kirkus Reviews*



About the Author

Barry Wittenstein has worked at CBS Records, CBS News, and as a web editor and writer for Major League Baseball. He is the author of *Waiting for Pumpsie* and *The Boo-Boos That Changed the World*. Barry lives in New York City.



About the Illustrator

Keith Mallett's work was commissioned to celebrate the 50th anniversary of Jackie Robinson's breakthrough into major league baseball, has graced the cover of *Chicken Soup for the African-American Soul*, and has been featured in many movies and TV shows. He is the illustrator of *Take a Picture of Me*, *James VanDerZee* and *How Jelly Roll Morton Invented Jazz*. Keith lives in San Diego, California.

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Before You Read

Setting the Stage

Sonny's Bridge is a natural choice for monthly displays like Black History Month or for displays themed around New York City, music, and the Civil Rights era. Consider building a window or table display along with the following titles:

- *Kenya's Song* by Linda Trice (music)
- *Under the Mambo Moon* by Julia Durango (music)
- *Duke Ellington's Nutcracker Suite* by Anna Harwell Celenza (music, Black History Month)
- *Magic Trash: A Story of Tyree Guyton and His Art* by J. H. Shapiro (art, Black History Month)
- *Follow Chester! A College Football Team Fights Racism and Makes History* by Gloria Respress-Churchwell (Black History Month, Civil Rights)
- *Waiting for Pumpsie* by Barry Wittenstein (Black History Month, Civil Rights)
- *After Gandhi: One Hundred Years of Nonviolent Resistance* by Anne Sibley O'Brien and Perry O'Brien (Black History Month, Civil Rights)
- *Music Was IT: Young Leonard Bernstein* by Susan Goldman Rubin (music, New York City)
- *Esquivel! Space-Age Sound Artist* by Susan Wood (music, New York City)
- *A Moon for Moe and Mo* by Jane Breskin Zalben (diversity, New York City)

Statues

Before reading *Sonny's Bridge*, clear an open space and invite listeners to play a game of statues with Sonny Rollins's famous album *The Bridge*. Dance along with the music, then freeze when it stops! This is a great way to work out the wiggles.

Segue from statues into storytime by talking about the music: Have your listeners heard music like that before? What sounds did they notice? How do they feel after dancing to it?

Meet the Instrument

Bring a saxophone to your event space and allow storytime listeners to (gently!) touch and examine it. Introduce the different parts of the instrument; kids will be delighted by the spit valve!

Talk about how a saxophone makes music: Using the mouthpiece, a musician blows air into the instrument across the reed. The reed vibrates, making a sound which is made louder by the body of the instrument. By covering or releasing the keys, musicians change the pitch of this sound.

Why is it called a saxophone? It was invented in the 1840s by a man named Adolphe Sax! How many kinds of saxophones are there? Fourteen! Is it a woodwind or a brass instrument? Woodwind (because the mouthpiece is made of reed, not metal)!

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Jazzing Up the Bookstore

Jazz is party music—something people listen to while they're having a good time. But most places that play live jazz today don't open until after kids' bedtimes. A reading of *Sonny's Bridge* is a great opportunity to introduce young readers to a whole new musical world!

Begin with a half-hour of jazz and refreshments, settle in to read *Sonny's Bridge*, and wrap up with a little more music for a bookstore event they'll never forget.

Finding Tunes

For most bookstore event spaces, a jazz trio or quartet will be the right fit. If area bands are outside your budget range, consider asking your local high school or college if they have a jazz ensemble. If you're in the same town or city as a conservatory with a jazz program, that's another great place to inquire about booking student talent.

If live music is not feasible, never fear! Check out the following albums for a jazz sound Sonny would recognize:

- *The Bridge* (Sonny Rollins)
- *Brilliant Corners* (Thelonious Monk with Sonny Rollins and Clark Terry)
- *Kind of Blue* (Miles Davis)
- *St. Thomas* (Sonny Rollins)
- *The Freedom Suite* (Sonny Rollins)

DIY Jazz Joint

Staging Success

Jazz joints are all about atmosphere:

- Dimming the main lights and putting up Christmas lights or other indirect lighting can give any space a glamorous sparkle.
- Set up a snack bar: cheese, fruit, crackers, and juice.
- A little neon goes a long way and can often be found at a very reasonable price; consider ordering a DIY neon sign kit from an online vendor or hitting up your local hardware store for a few feet of neon el wire.
- Cluster chairs in groups of three and four around the edges of the space for a more intimate, club-like feel; remember to leave a little floor space up front for dancing!



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Word Search

B E B O B B H K S L
M E Q I R R J A Z Z
Z L B I L O X D H Z
G V D O V O O A R C
U G A E P K R V I W
E H S H P L A Y E K
G H O N E Y N L F V
A N L M P N Q Z V C
E Q O T O J Y R F R
J C I S U M P Z T C

BRIDGE

SONNY

SAXOPHONE

HARLEM

BROOKLYN

BEBOP

PLAY

JAZZ

SOLO

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Coloring Sheet

