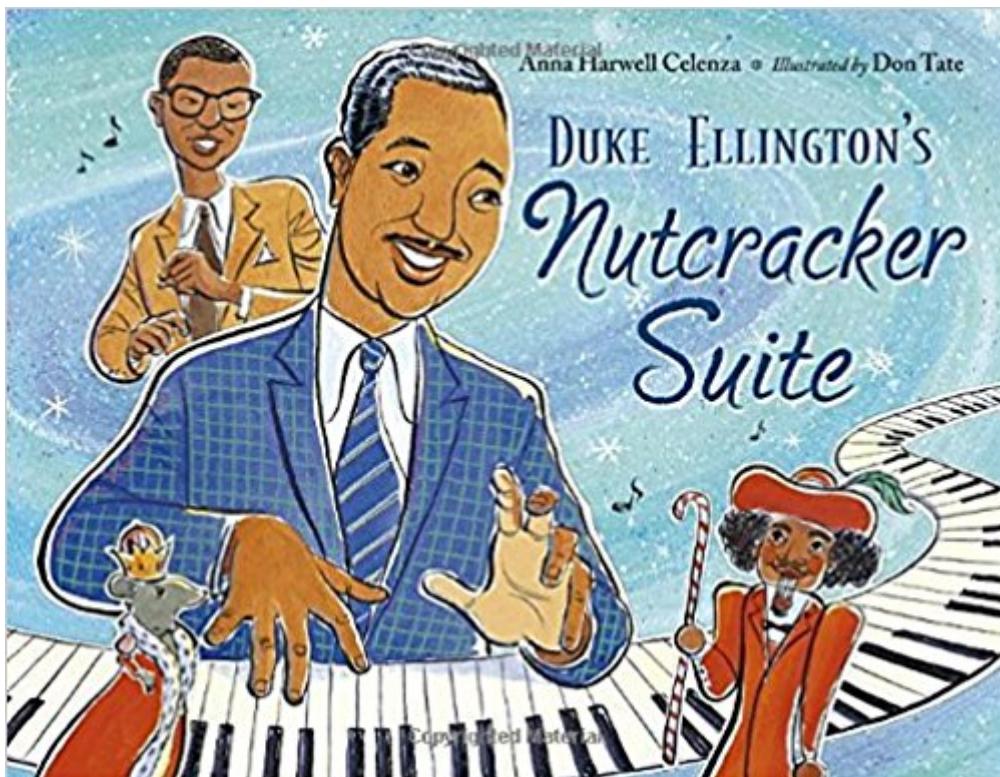


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Duke Ellington's Nutcracker Suite



Synopsis

It's a challenge to transform the "Nutcracker Suite's" romantic orchestra into jumpin' jazz melodies, but that's exactly what Duke Ellington and his collaborator, Billy Strayhorn, did. Ellington's band members were not so sure that a classical ballet could become a cool-cat jazz number. But Duke and Billy, inspired by their travels and by musical styles past and present, infused the composition with Vegas glitz, Hollywood glamour, and even a little New York jazz. CD recording of the Ellington/Strayhorn composition included.

Book Information

Lexile Measure: 620L (What's this?)

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Shipping Weight: 15.2 ounces

Average Customer Review: 4.6 out of 5 stars 10 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #361,415 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #30 in Books > Children's Books > Arts, Music & Photography > Music > History #79 in Books > Children's Books > Biographies > Performing Arts #94 in Books > Children's Books > Biographies > Musical

Age Range: 6 - 9 years

Grade Level: 3 - 4

Customer Reviews

Anna Harwell Celenza is a musicologist and the author of several books for adults and children regarding music history and the history of art. Her children's books include THE FAREWELL SYMPHONY, PICTURES AT AN EXHIBITION, GERSHWIN'S RHAPSODY IN BLUE, and VIVALDI'S FOUR SEASONS. Anna lives in Baltimore, Maryland.

This is a great book for an introduction to Duke Ellington for kids. It also opens the possibility for a lesson on comparing Tchaikovsky's Nutcracker to Duke Ellingtons.

Stocking stuffer gift for my husband. He's an Ellington fan and I'm a Nutcracker Suite fan. Nice to

combine both our interest and have a laugh!

We love this book and cd!! 'Bought it first for my five year old grand niece, who saw the ballet for the first time this year. She thinks the book & story "very perfect", prefers his versions of the music and would like to see rge ballet dancers dance to it too.Liked it so much, I bought a copy for myself.

The music on the CD is great: a full big-band jazz rendition of the popular ballet music. (The CD is only available in the more expensive hardback version.)I think the book is fun, but filled with some imaginative 1960-style "hep cat lingo" that isn't going to appeal to everyone. Another fact that will either be positive or not is that race isn't mentioned. Ellington is "an American pianist, composer, and big-band leader", not "an African-American". Some people will think that's positive, because we're focusing on his incredible achievements instead of on his skin color, and others will be unhappy because we're "erasing" his race. You'll have to make your own choice on that score.

This Ellington "do over" of the immortal Tchaikowsky ballet is just delightful! Jazzy, witty, and just enough to remind you of all your favorites from the original.

Goes with previous Nutcracker evaluations ... adds diversity for the nutcracker collectors. This isn't the actual story version - but HOW Ellington actually decided to write his version There are story versions with African-American characters using Duke Ellington's music available (not sure where)... but keep looking for diversity - You'll find it !!

One of the best things about Christmas time is the opportunity to listen to the great Nutcracker Suite by Tchaikovsky as interpreted by The Duke Ellington Orchestra with the remarkable arrangements by Billy Strayhorn. This wonderful book is for children and adults of all ages who appreciate the cultural heritage and treasure that constitutes The Duke Ellington Orchestra. I highly recommend the hardcover copy of the book so that you obtain the CD that is included. Duke, Billy and the band never sounded better! The author of this marvelous book captures the era, the personalities of the composers and arrangers, and the perplexed musicians who were challenged to interpret a well-known classical masterpiece. At first the musicians were resistive to trying something out of their 'comfort zone.' The author describes how Billy Strayhorn won them over and convinced them that they would have a good time with the new interpretation: Dance of the Reed-Pipes becomes "Toot Toot Tootie Toot" for example and Dance of the Sugar-Plum Fairy is entitled "Sugar Rum

Cherry." Anna Harwell Celenza acknowledges that her descriptions of the whole process is indebted to David Hajdu's biography of Billy Strayhorn "Lush Life" (North Point Press 1996) as well as her own imagination for the studio dates. She appears to get the "tone" of the personalities involved just right and makes the whole endeavor memorable as well as enjoyable. Special mention must be given to the remarkable illustrations by the gifted artist, Don Tate, who reproduces the studio sessions and the music with verve, color and lots of imagination. His renditions of the musicians involved is both accurate and insightful. This book is a joy!

Beautiful illustrations but I was really disappointed by the text. I had to really paraphrase for my 4 year old to get the idea. I don't really think my older nephews would have appreciated the text either, as nothing really happens until they get to the studio to record...But he loved the idea of doing something differently, and I think I've finally changed his mind about jazz!! Served its purpose.

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