

2003 Notable Children's Recordings

2003 Notable Children's Recordings Committee: Bruce Farrar, chair, Public Library of Nashville and Davidson County (Tenn.); Thomas J. Barthelmess, Spokane County (Wash.) Library District; Virginia M. Gustin, Sonoma County Library, Santa Rosa, Calif.; Annisha Jeffries, Cleveland Public Library; Kathleen Apuzzo Krasniewicz, Perrot Library, Old Greenwich, Conn.; Amy Lilien-Harper, Ferguson Library, Harry Bennett Branch, Stamford, Conn.; Alice R. Neve, St. Paul (Minn.) Public Library; Diane G. Person, Brooklyn, N.Y.; and Glenna M. Sloan, Queens College School of Education, Flushing, N.Y.

26 Fairmount Avenue: Books 1-4. Listening Library. 3 hr., 3 cassettes or 4 CDs
Author and illustrator Tomie dePaola narrates this story of his childhood in suburban Connecticut in the 1930's with the same wit, flair, and charm that characterize his visual art.

Beethoven's Wig. Rounder Records. 35 min. 1 CD
Richard Perlmutter has taken eleven well-known classical pieces and written clever, humorous lyrics that will have the whole family singing along. Leave the CD playing to hear the orchestral versions at the end.

Boy. Harper Children's Audio. 4 hr., 3 cassettes
Roald Dahl employs his descriptive abilities in this warm, wicked, and delectable memoir. Stage veteran Derek Jacobi moves through the stories perfectly, indulging his dramatic sensibilities for the oversized tales, and balancing his zeal with tender restraint for the more poignant moments.

Clic, Clac, Muu - Vacas Escritoras. Weston Woods. 7 min. 1 cassette, sold separately or with hardcover book
Background barnyard sounds and music enhance Jorge Pupo's Spanish reading of this humorous story of a farmer stuck with cows that type, hens on strike, and a very clever duck.

Coraline. Harper Children's Audio 3 hr. 2 cassettes or CDs
In this deliciously spooky audio, Coraline discovers a door that leads to an alternate world with "other" parents who definitely don't have her best interests at heart. Eerie music by the Gothic Archies and Neil Gaiman's evenly-paced reading capture and enhance its creepy atmosphere.

Everything On A Waffle. Listening Library. 3 hr. 2 cassettes or 3 CDs
While waiting for the return of her parents who are lost at sea, Primrose Squarp expands her view of the people around her. Interspersed with recipes, Kathleen McInerney's reading perfectly captures Primrose's youthful, naive tone in this unusual fairy-tale-like story.

Feather Boy. Listening Library. 6 hr. 4 cassettes
Thin and gangly Robert Nobel is the class squit, "his arms and legs like white string loosely knotted at the elbows and knees." Nicky Singer's touching tale of a boy who finds his strength and his voice through an unlikely friendship is engagingly read by Philip Franks.

Francie. Recorded Books 4.5 hr. 4 cassettes

Thirteen-year-old Francie's sense of justice puts her family in peril. Sisi Aisha Johnson lends her fresh, unaffected voice to this story set in segregated rural Alabama, skillfully communicating the detail and tension of the text, and honoring Karen English's use of the vernacular.

The Frogs Wore Red Suspenders. Harper Children's Audio. 50 min. 1 cassette

How better to experience poetry than aurally, the better to appreciate the rhyme, the rhythm, and the riot that Prelutsky teases out of every turn of phrase in this collection of 28 of his own high-spirited pieces?

Good Night, Gorilla. Weston Woods. 4 min. 1 cassette or CD, sold separately or with paperback book

A delightful tranquility pervades Peggy Rathmann's charming late-night zoo outing. Anthony Edwards' relaxed pace allows for plenty of time to pore over the illustrations and savor the many variations of Brahms' Lullaby woven through the recording.

The Grave. Recorded Books. 6.5 hr. 5 cassettes

When thirteen-year-old Tom tumbles into a mysterious pit, he falls through space and time to awaken in 1847 Ireland and the gritty realities of the potato famine. Gerard Doyle has an uncanny ability to slip seamlessly from '70s Liverpoolian lilt to Irish voices of an earlier time.

How Do Dinosaurs Say Good Night? Weston Woods. 4 min. 1 cassette or CD, sold separately or with hardcover book

Amidst roars, sighs and kisses, these well-behaved dinosaurs say good night and go to bed, just as they should! Jane Yolen's spirited reading, in combination with background music and dinosaur noises, bring this entertaining story to life.

The Journey. Live Oak Media. 12 min. 1 cassette & hardcover book

Daisy Egan's sweet, youthful reading, complemented by music and country sounds, perfectly captures Sarah Stewart's story of a young Amish girl visiting the city for the first time.

Latin Playground. Putumayo World Music. 35 min. 1 CD

This lively introduction to Latin American culture includes eleven songs performed in Spanish, English, Maya, or Portuguese by North, Central, and South American musicians. Song lyrics and liner notes in English and Spanish are included.

Love, Ruby Lavender. Listening Library. 3 hr. 3 cassettes

In Ruby Lavender, Deborah Wiles has given us a nine-year-old heroine with lots of spunk and even more heart. Judith Ivey's rambunctious reading brings Ruby (and her barnyard full of friends and foes) to life, and so puts Halleluia, Mississippi, on the map.

Maniac Magee. Listening Library. 4.5 hr. 3 cassettes or 4 CDs or 3 tapes and book

Challenging the ignorance and racial prejudice in his segregated town, Maniac Magee becomes a legend as he makes friends in both ends of town and finds a new home. S. Epatha Merkerson's skilled reproduction of ethnically diverse speech enlivens the characters in this 1991 Newbery Award winner.

Martin's Big Words. Weston Woods. 10 min. 1 cassette or CD, sold separately or with hardcover book

Martin Luther King, Jr.'s "big" words like FREEDOM and LOVE resonate powerfully in Michael Clarke Duncan's rich tones. Doreen Rappaport's spare text and Bryan Collier's striking pictures are further enhanced by Crystal Taliefero's inspirational background music.

More Tales of Uncle Remus. Recorded Books. 3.25 hr. 3 cassettes

As adapter of these traditional Brer Rabbit folktales, Julius Lester captures the outrageous tricks and other animals' responses in this lively and humorous collection of regional stories.

Pictures of Hollis Woods. Listening Library. 3 hr., 18 min. 2 cassettes

Hollis Woods is running away. Again. Hope Davis reads Patricia Reilly Giff's novel with grit and tenderness, capturing the raspy heartbreak of loneliness and the healing power of home.

Ruby Holler. Harper Children's Audio. 5 hr. 3 cassettes

Dallas and Florida, 13-year-old "trouble twins" in Sharon Creech's, "Ruby Holler", leave the Boxtton Creek Home to join an eccentric couple, Tiller and Sairy, on an adventure filled with mystery and buried treasure. Donna Murphy's reading takes the listener to Ruby Holler, a beautiful and mysterious place that changes all their lives forever.

Saffy's Angel. Listening Library. 4.5 hr. 3 cassettes

Saffy is upset to learn that she is adopted. Julia Sawalha's ingenue voice brings vivid life to the memorable characters in Hilary McKay's absorbing, often-humorous story of a young girl's quest for the truth about her place in the world.

A Single Shard. Listening Library. 3 hr. 3 cassettes or CDs

Graeme Malcolm interprets Linda Sue Park's measured, graceful prose with expert timing. His voice subtly evokes the gruffness of Potter Min, the kindness of Min's wife, the philosophical musings of Crane-man, and the youthful respectfulness for his elders as well as the firm determination of Tree-ear.

So You Want To Be President?. Weston Woods. 22 min. 1 cassette or CD, sold separately or with hardcover book

Here are some important things to know for past, present, and aspiring Commanders-in-Chief. Stockard Channing infuses this Caldecott winner with life and wry humor.

The Thief Lord. Listening Library. 8.5 hr. 5 cassettes

In the back alleys and dark canals of Venice, a private detective tracks down two runaways. Narrator Simon Jones breathes life into Cornelia Funke's adventure tale with a touch of the fantastic.

The Twits. Harper Children's Audio. 1 hr. 1 cassette

Not only are Mr. and Mrs. Twit repulsive to eye and nose, they're also downright mean. Simon Callow reads Roald Dahl's tale of this delightfully revolting couple with droll spirit.

Why Don't You Get a Horse, Sam Adams?. Weston Woods. 1 cassette (20 min.) or CD (58 min.), sold separately or with paperback book
Stirring music and the clank of sword blades enliven three inspired readings of Jean Fritz's history of a quirky and revolutionary personality.