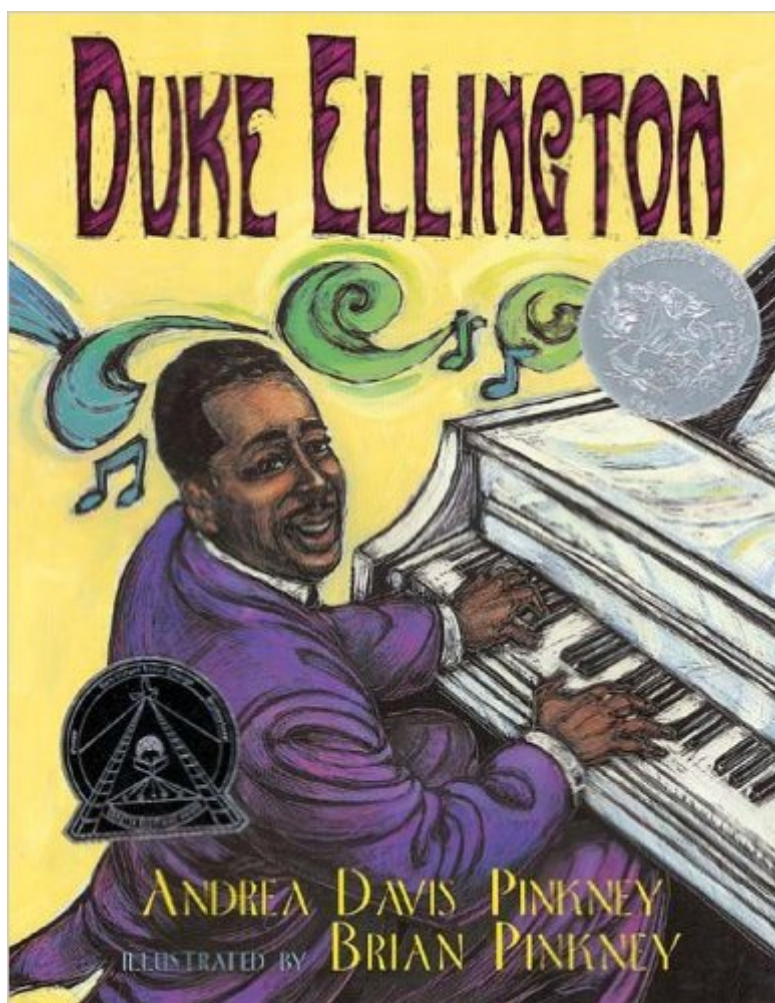


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# Duke Ellington: The Piano Prince And His Orchestra



## Synopsis

Another stunning picture book biography of a prominent twentieth-century African-American in the arts, from the creative team behind Alvin Ailey.

## Book Information

Lexile Measure: 800 (What's this?)

Paperback: 32 pages

Publisher: Hyperion Book CH; 1 edition (December 12, 2006)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0786814209

ISBN-13: 978-0786814206

Product Dimensions: 8.5 x 0.2 x 11 inches

Shipping Weight: 5.6 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.6 out of 5 starsÂ Â See all reviewsÂ (21 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #103,315 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #4 inÂ Books > Children's Books > Arts, Music & Photography > Music > Jazz #9 inÂ Books > Children's Books > Arts, Music & Photography > Music > History #30 inÂ Books > Children's Books > Biographies > Musical

Age Range: 5 - 9 years

Grade Level: Kindergarten - 4

## Customer Reviews

I teach 3rd grade at a very "white" private school. My students absolutely LOVED this story, asked questions galore when it was done, oooo'd and ahhh'd over the amazing illustrations. The wonderful story and the artwork practically made it possible to hear the music. At the same time, I wouldn't hesitate to read this story to older students, even in the upper grades. The book provides in-depth biographical information--there is nothing babyish about it.

For my 5 and 1/2 year old musician son, it was a glorious experience. The illustrations are warm and convey a sense of the music and the mood. The dancers leap off of the page. The words are very rhythmic and make you want to sing out as you are reading them. My one complaint is that when I turned to the last page, I wanted to hear "Take the A Train" play. Bravo to the Pinkneys!

I just finished reading the Pinkney's "Duke Ellington" to a first grade class in our predominantly white rural school northeast of Seattle. Being trained as a musician, but now working as a librarian, I loved

the way this text really swings. When I noticed much of the slang was going over the heads of the children, I'd ask them if they knew what certain words meant. Interestingly, the one African-American girl in the class was hip to most of the jive. Sure some of the terminology went right past these kids, but they got into the groove, which is carried along soulfully by the vibrant illustrations. Like another reviewer here, when I was done reading this to the kids, I wanted to hear "Take the 'A' Train." Fortunately I had a CD of "Duke Ellington's 16 Most Requested Songs" sitting in my library, so I popped it in, and these kids were a-hoppin' and a-boppin'. I think next time, I'll play the CD first. Hopefully, I'll be able to settle 'em down afterwards to hear this jazzy biography.

This beautiful picture book biography recounts the life and career of jazz musician, Edward Kennedy Ellington -- better known to all as the Duke. When the Duke's parents enrolled him in piano lessons for the very first time, he flat out did not want to go. At that time he had visions of playing baseball; but his parents insisted that he learn to play the piano. The music lessons were slow and not a lot of fun. It wasn't long before he quit taking lessons altogether and kissed the piano goodbye. Little did he know then that the melodious rhythms of Ragtime would draw him back to this instrument again and lead to his success as a great musician, composer, and orchestra leader! Andrea Davis Pinkney does an outstanding job sharing the Duke's story with young readers. Her husband, Brian Pinkney, matches her wonderful text with vibrant illustrations, which translate the Duke's music into a series of bold colored spirals, waves, curls, and swirls that literally leap off of the pages of the book! Without a doubt, this husband and wife collaboration will guide readers in appreciating the rhythm and beat of the Duke's life and music. This book is truly a musician's delight!

"Duke Ellington" is a biography of the legendary composer. The book is directed towards younger readers. Andrea Davis Pinkney's text is well complemented by the rich, colorful illustrations by her husband and collaborator, Brian Pinkney. The book begins with Ellington's childhood, and describes his early interest in music and the beginning of his career. The Pinkneys portray his triumph at the Cotton Club, his musical partnership with Billy Strayhorn, and other aspects of his life and career. The book concludes with the triumphant premiere of Ellington's great composition "Black, Brown, and Beige" at Carnegie Hall in New York. One of the aspects of the book that I like best is Andrea Pinkney's use of hip slang that recalls the era being portrayed. Example: "Yeah, those solos were kickin'. Hot-buttered bop, with lots of sassy-cool tones." And Brian Pinkney's illustrations combine vibrant color with an appealing "antiqued" look. Overall, an excellent educational book for young

readers.

This is an amazing book about Duke Ellington. The language of the book is delightful. It sends you on a voyage back to the early 1900's and you can practically hear Duke Ellington and his band playing. Elementary school children will love this book. It will expose them to a prominent African-American and a musical era that they might never hear about until they are much older. This book contains absolutely beautiful illustrations that add to the joyous feeling conveyed by this story.

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