

## Picture Books for Inclusive Music Studios: A Select Annotated Bibliography

Music Teachers National Association

National Conference 2023, Poster Presentation

Sara Ernst, University of Oklahoma, smernst@ou.edu, [www.saraernstpiano.com](http://www.saraernstpiano.com)

Costanza, Stephen. ***King of Ragtime: The Story of Scott Joplin***. New York: Atheneum Books for Young Readers, 2021.

Details the history and development of ragtime, focusing on the early life of Scott Joplin. The book includes important historical context, with a focus on Joplin's creative intuition in developing this new style.

Engle, Margarita. ***Dancing Hands: How Teresa Carreño Played the Piano for President Lincoln***. New York: Atheneum Books for Young Readers, 2019.

A work of historical fiction about the famous Venezuelan pianist and composer Teresa Carreño. Explores her immense talent, her rise to fame and travel to the U.S., and the effects of the Civil War on the President. Winner of the Pura Belpré Illustrator Award.

Fahy, Davene. ***Anthony Best: A Picture Book about Asperger's***. New York: Sky Pony, 2013.

Fiction. Explores the friendship of a little boy with Asperger's and his neighbor. Anthony gets a piano delivered and discovers his love of music making, while the girl learns to appreciate the unique traits of her friend.

Krakauer, Hoong Yee Lee. ***Rabbit Mooncakes***. Boston: Little, Brown, and Co., 1994.

A touching autobiographical story about two Chinese American sisters and the Harvest Moon Festival. The young pianists discover how sharing music is a delightful addition to the family celebration.

Macdonald, Maryann. ***The Little Piano Girl***. [The life story of Mary Lou Williams]. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Books for Children, 2010.

A charming, fictionalized account of Mary Lou Williams, as a sweet girl, who had a gift for improvisation at the piano. While focusing on her talents and creative growth as a child, the book also explores themes of social class, racism, and bullying.

Millman, Isaac. ***Moses Goes to a Concert***. New York: Square Fish, 2012.

Fiction. Moses is a boy with hearing loss who attends his first concert.

Moeckel, Amanda. ***Khalida and the Most Beautiful Song***. Salem, MA: Page Street Kids, 2018.

Fiction. An artistic story focusing on a young brown girl who hears a song in her head in the middle of the night. She waits throughout her busy day to finally find time to explore her tune at the piano. Ends with an outdoor recital featuring a diverse, impromptu audience of park goers.

Newman, Lesléa. ***Ketzel, the Cat who Composed***. Somerville, MA: Candlewick Press, 2015.

Set in New York City, a Jewish composer befriends a tuxedo cat. Based on a true story in which the composer notates the “work” of the cat, and the cat wins an award. A Junior Library Guild Selection, awarded by the Association of Jewish Libraries.

Parker, Robert Andrew. ***Piano Starts Here: The Young Art Tatum***. New York: Schwartz & Wade Books, 2008.

A biography of Art Tatum, telling a story about his increasingly limited vision and how playing the piano gave him purpose as a child, as he provided music for his family and community. Follows him through his rise to fame, while he remains loyal to his roots.

Rusch, Elizabeth. ***For the Love of Music: The Remarkable Story of Maria Anna Mozart***. New York: Tricycle Press, 2011.

A fictionalized account of the early lives of Mozart children, told from the perspective of Maria Anna. Provides historical context to the inability of a young woman to pursue a career, and focuses on her commitment to music making, as a mother and wife, despite this. Also see: Ades, Audrey. *I Am Mozart, Too: The Lost Genius of Maria Anna Mozart*. New York: Farrar Strauss Giroux, 2022.

Seeger, Pete. ***The Deaf Musicians***. New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 2006.

Fiction. A story about a jazz musician who started to lose his hearing. While he could not continue with his current band, he formed his own band of musicians, who like him, were losing their hearing. Winner of the Schneider Family Book Award.

Special Music School Kaufman Music Center, Students of the. ***Who Is Florence Price?*** New York: Schirmer Trade Books, 2021.

Written and illustrated by middle school students. A biographical timeline of the life of Florence Price, with a focus on major life events. Begins and ends with the 2009 discovery of her music. Addresses how she had to be persistent to her goals, despite racist views of orchestras.

Wood, Susan. ***Esquivell!: Space-Age Sound Artist***. Watertown, MA: Charlesbridge, 2016.

A biographical story of Juan García Esquivel, focusing initially on his intense enjoyment of piano playing as a child in Mexico. Describes how he found his niche as a popular sound artist, composer, and conductor.

---

***Research into the importance of diversity in and use of children's literature:***

Leahy, Marie A., and Bridget C. Foley. “Diversity in Children's Literature.” *World Journal of Educational Research* 5, no. 2 (April 18, 2018): 172–183. <https://doi.org/10.22158/wjer.v5n2p172>.