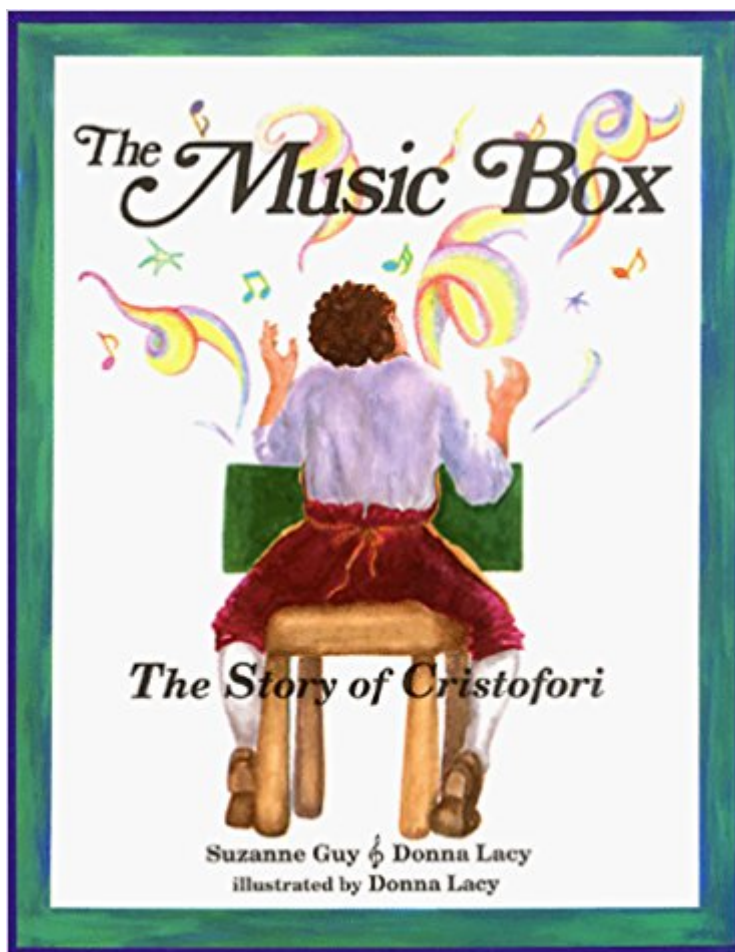


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The Music Box: The Story Of Cristofori



Synopsis

Bartolomeo Cristofori, an Italian harpsichord maker, invented a special music machine more than 300 years ago. And the piano still speaks to us today. This fun and noisy story is about that discovery and its secret power. Written with historical accuracy in an imaginative style, the book's large colorful figures will appeal to children ages 4-10. The final pages include diagrams that older children will find interesting.

Book Information

Hardcover: 32 pages

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Average Customer Review: 4.4 out of 5 stars 7 customer reviews

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Age Range: 4 and up

Grade Level: Preschool and up

Customer Reviews

Kindergarten-Grade 2-A simply told story of Bartolomeo Cristofori, a 17th-century Italian harpsichord maker and musician whose love of both music and volume prompted him to invent the piano. Fascinated with sound, Cristofori experimented with wire and hammers, stoppers, and dampers, eventually creating an instrument he named the gravicembalo col piano e forte. The book suggests he decided to call it the piano, "for short," which differs from the truth a bit, since its name was actually shortened to "pianoforte" and it continued to be called that for some time. Due to fictionalizing in the text, readers may need to rely on the three-page afterword about Cristofori, his times, and the piano for the facts of the story. Uninspired drawings, pasted-on photographs, and some poor-quality reproductions illustrate the text. A flawed introduction to one of the most common instruments and one of history's lesser-known musical figures. Jane Marino, Scarsdale Public Library, NY Copyright 1999 Reed Business Information, Inc.

"A delightful new book designed for the youngest piano students. Will help make piano practice a more exciting activity." -- The Keyboard Companion, Winter, 1998
"Bartolomeo created music with hammers and strings. Suzanne Guy and Donna Lacy have created music with words and pictures." -- Randall and Nancy Faber
"The vibrant colors and authentic period costumes are a feast for the eyes." -- American Music Teacher, January 2000
"Guy & Lacy have created music with words and pictures. An important contribution to the literature for children." -- Sally G. Reed, Executive Director of Friends of Libraries, USA
"unlocks the miracle of the piano. vibrant colors and authentic period costumes are a feast for the eyes." -- Feroza LaBonne, American Music Teacher, January 2000

I bought this book hoping to use it for my young piano students ages 5-7 or so. It's very cute but it has so little historical information in the main story part of it that I don't think it's worth telling my kids to read. About the only true facts in it are Cristofori's name (Bartolomeo di Francesco Cristofori), that he was born in Italy, that he worked for Prince Ferdinando in Florence, and that he is credited with inventing the piano. And this in about 27 pages. It does list some pieces of the piano action that Cristofori invented as well, but does not explain them: "Hammers to bounce up and hit the strings, stoppers and dampers, some gadgety things, covered with leather, felt may work too. I can see it and hear it, I know what to do." Facts are replaced with lots of fiction, obvious to an adult reader, but not necessarily obvious fiction to a child. I am afraid that either children will believe everything in the book as fact, or they will believe nothing because of the fanciful way in which it is written. I don't mind so much the imaginations of his childhood (we really don't know so it could be real) but the things we know not to be true. For example, it basically says that the invention of the piano was an accident when hammers fell on strings even though the clavichord which uses tangents to strike strings had already been in use for centuries. It also states that everyone was watching and waiting to see what Cristofori was doing in his workshop, making all those odd sounds, as if builders of musical instruments didn't normally make sounds, and as if Cristofori's first piano was on back order even before he invented it. In reality, of course, it took 50-100 years for pianos to even be taken seriously. To me, this ignores all the work done by so many different people to make the piano what it is today, and makes it look easy. It also has Cristofori naming his piano ("I'll call it 'piano' for short") which is completely untrue. The book also doesn't make clear what Cristofori was trying to invent that was different from the harpsichord. It tries, but in such flowery poetic language, I am left thinking "that sounds nice- but I still don't get it!" "Where are the whispers? Where are the splashes? I can't hear the booms, and I can't make the crashes." and "It will

be a music box that can make a sound for every shade of color in the rainbow."It all sounds mysterious and pretty but will my 5- to 7-year-olds understand that that is supposed to mean that he can play softer or louder or hold down some notes longer than others (unlike the single-volumed harpsichord) and that it will be loud enough to be heard by more people than just the one playing it (unlike the hushed clavichord)?The authors seems to try to make up for these short-comings by putting a bunch of information in the back but that isn't really suited to young children and the fairy-tale story part isn't suited to older children. Another pet peeve is that the whole book acts like the world revolved around Cristofori and that he had it on a string. This is not only obviously untrue but it cuts out some important lessons that could be learned like: "Maybe no one knows you now, maybe you're poor now, but with a lot of hard work and perseverance, you can achieve great things in life, just like Cristofori" and "Success usually doesn't come instantly, but good things come to those who wait". You may think I'm over-analyzing a children's book, and you may be right, but I just think if they can put fiction in there, and that's not too much information for the kids, why not put some more facts instead? Needless to say, I don't plan on using it with my kids, but it gives me some good ideas to make my own little book with some basic facts for them. I like the story-book style that helps make learning fun and the large picture illustrations that kids love.

This book is incredible! It tells the story of how the piano was invented. It was actually an accident! It is historical fiction but it has a lot of neat facts incorporated in it. I stumbled upon the title online but when I went to check it out at the local library I came up empty. It was nowhere to be found, so I took a chance and purchased it. I'm so glad I did. I want to use it in a lesson plan for my future classroom to teach kids that ANYONE can be successful because they can with determination!

An amusing way to tell a wonderful story, this book captures the imagination and is filled with historical information as well.

I would like to give this book to many people if only copies were available at a reasonable price. I love this book and think it needs to be a part of every piano studio. The history of the piano is not well known, but should be.

"The Music Box - The Story of Cristofori" is a unique educational story about the invention of the piano. In a wonderful and clear fashion, children (and adults) learn about music before the piano existed and discover the mechanical-musical genius of Cristofori's invention. Additional pages at the

end of the book give more specific information about the piano and the inventor. Recommended for all children to encourage exploration. Also suggested for elementary classes and all music teachers...Dr. Kathleen Kain, scientist and educator.

I love this book. Any young person studying music should read this book. It not only familiarizes kids(not to mention adults) with the story of the most important person in the history of the piano, but it has a section that teaches about the piano and how it works. I've read it a bunch of times and look back on it regularly. Parents don't always think their kid taking piano lessons needs music books like they need school books, but they do. This book goes well in a young person's bedtime reading library.

I love this book! It is so much fun to read aloud and kids love it. I've been fortunate enough to hear the author and illustrator read this book to kids and they were mesmerized. The language is as musical as its subject and the illustrations are true to the times and bring Bartolomeo to life. Kudos to Suzanne Guy and Donna Lacey.

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