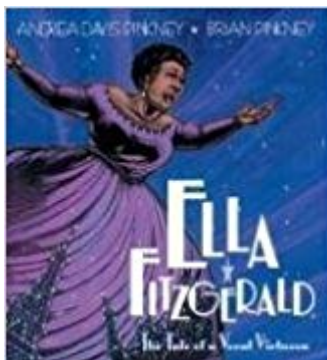


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# Ella Fitzgerald: The Tale Of A Vocal Virtuosa



## Synopsis

Ella Fitzgerald began her life as a singer on the stage of the Apollo Theater when she was just seventeen years old. Her rich voice and vocal innovations brought her fame and a remarkable career that spanned half a century and won her generations of fans around the world. Acclaimed author Andrea Davis Pinkney has told Ella's inspiring story in the voice of Scat Cat Monroe, a feline fan whose imagined narrative sings with the infectious rhythms of scat. Two-time Caldecott Honor winner Brian Pinkney's dramatic perspectives and fantastical images offer a jazzy improvisation all their own. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

The talented husband-and-wife team behind Duke Ellington turns to jazz biography once again, this time showcasing the First Lady of Song. Narrated by Scat Cat Monroe, a feline in a zoot suit, the book spins four "tracks" on Fitzgerald's life, from her childhood in Yonkers performing on street corners, to her discovery at a 1934 talent contest at the legendary Apollo Theatre to her move into the "ping-pong rhythms" of bebop. Whether swinging at the Savoy "to a house packed tighter than the A train" or breaking the racial barrier at many clubs ("Ella's popularity showed them that a true star has no color it just shines"), the singer's career is expertly framed to fit a picture book format. The prose, while occasionally labored, swings to a syncopated beat and piles on the synesthesia ("Ella rolled out a tune sweet enough to bake

Grade 1-4-Scat Cat Monroe, a feline who earned his name by knowing the "Queen of Scat," tells

her story from "small-town girl to the First Lady of Song." The text, divided into four tracks (chapters), highlights Fitzgerald's early days in Harlem, singing with the Chick Webb Orchestra at the Savoy, and performing bebop with Dizzy Gillespie at Carnegie Hall. In a playful, conversational tone, this work nearly sings the rhythms of scat. Lively words and phrases like "Her voice was quick-fried rhythm" and "her scat swung to cloud nine and back" are scattered throughout. Brian Pinkney's distinctive scratchboard-and-acrylic paintings evoke the rhythm of the text and invite readers along on the ride. They will enjoy finding Scat Cat himself on most of the spreads. Bright colors, jazzy words, and energetic artwork bring the music of scat and Fitzgerald to life. A page of biographical information is included. This beautifully rendered tribute to the "Vocal Virtuosa" will be a welcome addition in all libraries. Shauna Yusko, King County Library System, Bellevue, WA  
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I am an elementary school music teacher, and I purchased this book as part of a lesson on Ella Fitzgerald. It's a little long for the little ones, but we can make it through. The upper grades love all the facts about Ella that are found in the book, and I love the "Scat Cat Monroe" narrator. This is a wonderful book to educate children about Ella. And EVERYONE needs to know about her!

This book, in both words and illustrations, is utterly gorgeous. It builds a beautiful, and accurate, picture of the life of one of the greatest jazz legends. Highly recommend this to all ages.

I don't know how kids would take to this book but I'm sure it could turn a lot of adults on the Ella's singing.

a picture book for kids. Not what I expected.

I could not help but leave the review for last on this one. When a classy cat is the narrator, you know it's going to be a good book. As classy as Ella Fitzgerald was, are the binding, paper illustrations, and status of this book. Written much differently from the rest of the books available. I am usually turned away from Ebonics, street slang, and rhyming everything. Surprisingly, I was able to follow along almost rhythmic. I love the "Scat Cat Monroe" narrator. "You may think I look like any other cat. But baby, I'm in a class all by myself. Scat Cat's my name. Scat Cat Monroe. A name I've earned. Got my name from knowin' Ella. Ella Fitzgerald. The Queen of Scat. What's scat? you ask.

Scat's the sound that don't hold back. Ella's sound-that was scat. Singing so supreme. Music's velvet-ribbon dream..." An iconic woman doesn't need a cat to tell her story but we need something to get kids engaged since this is about music way before their era. It was a great book to jive with. Beautiful pictures and a nice history lesson on this wonderful woman! Highly recommend this to all ages.

You open this book and the endpapers swirl and glow like black painted silk. They're the first indication you receive that this book is something special. Something different. Something apart from the rest. Using the narrating character of one Scat Cat Monroe, an actual well-dressed feline, the story follows Ella from child to lady of the stage. As we watch, Ella moves to Harlem thinking she's gonna make it big through dancing. Once there, however, she switches her focus and unleashes her fabulous voice. She pairs up with the Chick Webb Orchestra and Al Feldman. She then bebops with Dizzy Gillespie and earns herself the name "The Queen of Scat". It's a fabulous upbeat tale that takes the spirit of Ella Fitzgerald and lets her shine. The best possible tribute to her name. The text of the story is especially amusing. Sometimes a book will attempt to speak in a jiving slangy sort of way and simply come off as annoying. Other times, the author sounds as if he/she is trying too hard. Fortunately, Andrea Davis Pinkney has everything under control so that when the book says something like, "She won the contest straight up, kicked her dance dreams to the curb, and pinned all her hopes on being a singer", you know it's true. There's a poetry to this book's speech that never crosses the line from authentic to agonizing. Instead, it's got a rhythm all its own. Accompanying Andrea's text are Brian Pinkney's illustrations. At first I was a little put off by the amount of magical realism evident in its pages. Then I read Brian's inspirations (William H. Johnson, Aaron Douglas, the Art Deco movement, etc.) and it all made sense. And there's no arguing that the pictures here are fan-freakin'-tastic. Brian Pinkney has used scratchboard to make these images as bright and free flowing as they are. The result looks like nothing so much as woodcuts on acid. There's breath and movement to these pictures, and Ella herself has been granted the power of appearing larger than life. If I've any objections to this book, maybe it comes with the choice of creating Scat Cat Monroe. Do we really need an anthropomorphic cat to lure children into this story? But it's a small complaint. Andrea Pinkney is kind enough to supply a biography, bibliography, videography, and selected discography at the end of the book for future reference. Always a nice touch. The Pinkney duo have truly created one of the best picture books encompassing the jazz, scat, and bebop movements of the past. This is the book to read.

"You may think I look like any other cat. But baby, I'm in a class all by myself. Scat Cat's my name. Scat Cat Monroe. A name I've earned. Got my name from knowin' Ella. Ella Fitzgerald. The Queen of Scat. What's scat? you ask. Scat's the sound that don't hold back. Ella's sound-that was scat. Singing so supreme. Music's velvet-ribbon dream..." Narrated by this cool, zoot suited feline, Scat Cat Monroe introduces the incomparable, Ella Fitzgerald, to a whole new generation of fans. From her humble beginnings in Yonkers, New York, to her contest winning debut at Harlem's Apollo Theater at seventeen, to her meteoric rise, singing with the big bands and jazz artists of the 1930s and '40s, Scat Cat was there, stompin' at the Savoy with the Chick Webb Orchestra and jammin' to cloud nine and back with Dizzy Gillespie. "Now, when Ella performed, she let her lyrics go. She took her singing out to play." Andrea Davis Pinkney's engaging, lyrical text swings with imagery, magic, and rhythm. Brian Pinkney's bold, bright, and inventive illustrations dazzle, as they swirl around the pages to the music of the words. Together, word and art create an inspiring and captivating introductory biography starring the First Lady of Song. With an Author's Note at the end to complete the story, Ella Fitzgerald is an energetic, fun-filled tribute, that's perfect for music lovers 8-12, and also works well as a read-aloud for younger children.

satisfied. i think it is very good , fast . Great little business. Lovely, friendly follow-up. Awesome bread product. Go get yourself one. love it .

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