



Best of the Best Kids' Audio 2005

On the following pages you'll find *AudioFile's* picks from among the highest quality children's audiobooks of the past year. The 20 titles represent the best of what's possible in this medium—recordings of the finest literature for children and young adults today, translated into unique works by skilled narrators and precise productions. These audiobooks have all been awarded *AudioFile's* Earphones, named to the American Library Association's Notable Children's Recordings and YALSA Selections for young adults, or deemed among Capitol Choices' annual Audiobooks Too Good to Miss. As a bonus, two of the featured authors, Philip Pullman and Sharon Creech, tell why audio adds that special extra dimension to literature for kids. For an expanded list of titles, see www.audiofilemagazine.com, and be sure that you—and the children you listen with—don't miss these magical audio performances.

Kids' Audio 2005

Ages 4-6

DUCK FOR PRESIDENT

Doreen Cronin, read by Randy Travis (Weston Woods)

Doreen Cronin devises a clever introduction to politics for kids, and country music singer Randy Travis's drawl matches the text perfectly in a read-along that stands up to repeated listening.

I STINK!

Kate McMullan, Jim McMullan, read by Andy Richter (Weston Woods)

Andy Richter brings the McMullans' visual artistry and storytelling to life, and his deep, gravelly voice seems perfect for a proud, no-nonsense garbage truck. Fun from first pickup to last!

THE TRAIN THEY CALL THE CITY OF NEW ORLEANS

Steve Goodman, read by Tom Chapin (Live Oak Media)

Grammy winner Tom Chapin reads and sings of a vintage America that, for the most part, has disappeared. A package to delight children and adults alike.

WHEN MARIAN SANG*

Pam Munoz Ryan, read by Gail Nelson (Live Oak Media)

Gail Nelson reads this picture book biography of the great Marian Anderson with excellent expression. Lyrics to Anderson's songs are part of almost every spread, and the producers include original recordings of Anderson herself singing them. A stunning production.

Ages 8+

GIRL UNDERGROUND*

Morris Gleitzman, read by Mary-Anne Fahey (Bolinda Audio)

Mary-Anne Fahey's Australian accent lends believability to this timely adventure about Australia's immigration policy, terrorist threats, and the difference between the rights of criminals and illegal aliens. She expertly captures the young protagonist's excitement, spontaneity, and idealism.

IDA B

Katherine Hannigan, read by Lili Taylor (Listening Library)

How a sensitive, creative girl comes to terms with the monumental changes in her life makes for a deeply moving story for all ages. Lili Taylor tells Ida B's story with perfect pitch, pacing, and love.

MILLIONS

Frank Cottrell Boyce, read by Simon Jones (Harper Audio)

Simon Jones's effortless accents, impeccable timing, and, above all, empathy make this clever parable about greed work for all ages. A dazzling read of a cinematic story.

THE NEIL GAIMAN AUDIO COLLECTION*

Neil Gaiman, read by Neil Gaiman (Harper Audio)

Neil Gaiman's offbeat and engaging children's tales demonstrate a range of creative energy that will appeal to a wide audience. Gaiman is also a terrific performer with a pleasant British voice that's persuasively easy on the ear.

Ages 10+

AL CAPONE DOES MY SHIRTS

Gennifer Choldenko, read by Johnny Heller (Recorded Books)

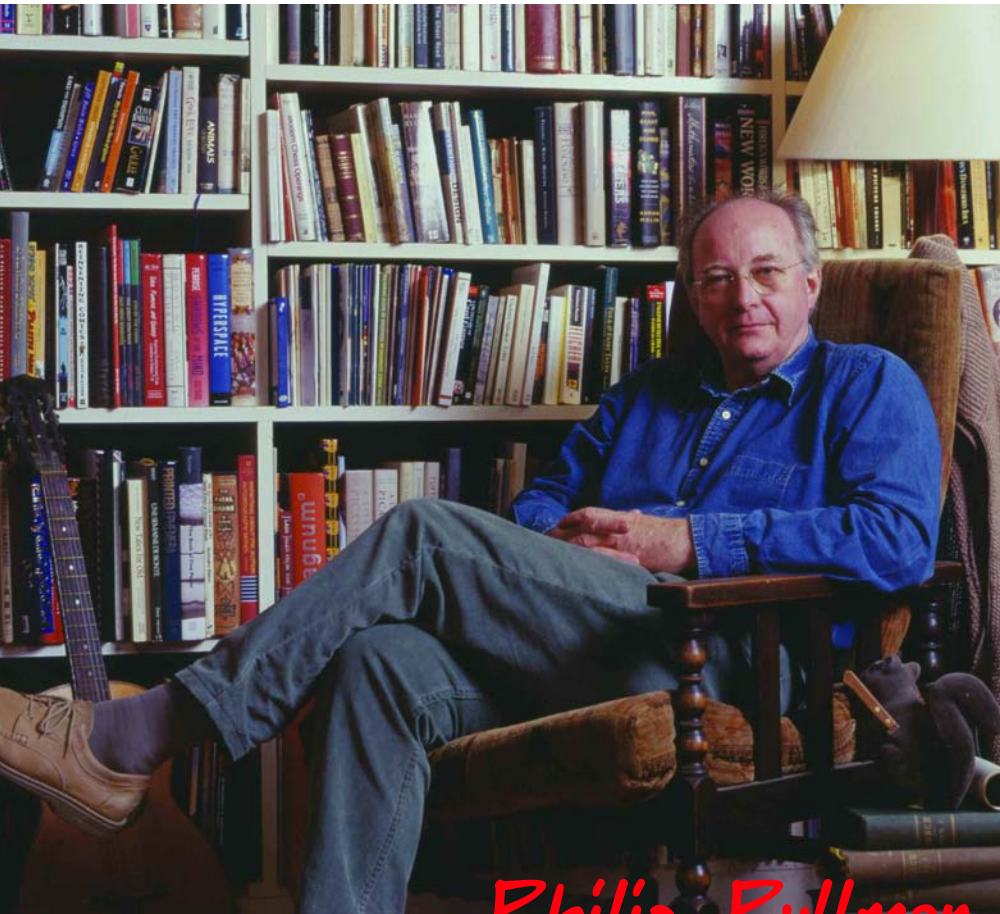
Johnny Heller has the ideal voice for a teenaged boy, projecting adolescent confusion, youthful enthusiasm, and humor. Choldenko has written an appealing children's book, which Heller allows adults to enjoy as well.

ARTEMIS FOWL

ARTEMIS FOWL: THE ARCTIC INCIDENT
ARTEMIS FOWL: THE ETERNITY CODE

Eoin Colfer, read by Nathaniel Parker (Listening Library)

Nathaniel Parker's splendid narration of the rip-roaring adventures of a young criminal mastermind is perfect family listening that just might encourage discussion of truth, friendship, and loyalty.



Philip Pullman

"When we are listening to a story, we have to supply the pictures—all the bits between the words. With the skillful reading of a good book, this experience becomes a very important part of our growing up—a part of what it means to be cultured, to be who we are."

DRAGON RIDER

Cornelia Funke, read by Brendan Fraser (Listening Library)
Brendan Fraser brings a whimsical interpretation to this light fantasy. Young listeners will surely enjoy the dragons, Scottish brownies, dwarves, and other magical creatures his narration brings to life.

THE GOLEM'S EYE

Jonathan Stroud, read by Simon Jones (Listening Library)
Listeners will delight in Simon Jones's characterization of the biting wit and subtle humanity of the djinni Bartimaeus in this fantasy of a wizard-ruled Britain.

NO TIME LIKE SHOW TIME

Michael Hoeye, read by Campbell Scott (Listening Library)
The redoubtable watchmaker mouse returns in another hilarious social satire. Campbell Scott's careful attention to the eccentricities of Hoeye's world makes this a standout for middle school and older listeners.

PETER AND THE STARCATCHERS

Dave Barry, Ridley Pearson, read by Jim Dale (Brilliance Audio)
Jim Dale gives a truly astonishing one-man performance of this Peter Pan prequel. Adults and children alike will enjoy this rollicking tale of pirates, talking porpoises, flying children, and a giant crocodile.

Young Adult

FAULT LINE

Janet Tashjian, read by Jason Harris, Clara Bryant (Listening Library)
Clara Bryant and Jason Harris illuminate the cycle of emotional, verbal, and physical abuse in this complex novel. Harris succeeds in making Kip a haunting character study of self-destruction.

FLIPPED

Wendelin Van Draanen, read by Andy Paris, Carine Montbertrand (Recorded Books)
Delightfully told from his and her points of view, this charming story of growing up and finding oneself is cleverly written, and both narrators are matched perfectly to their parts.



Sharon Creech

"I've learned that audiobooks are important to many young readers. Just yesterday, I received a letter from a girl who was listening to the audio version of Heartbeat while she wrote her letter, and I could hear the rhythm of the book in her writing."

A GREAT AND TERRIBLE BEAUTY

Libba Bray, read by Josephine Bailey (Listening Library)
Josephine Bailey delivers a poignant performance as Gemma, who struggles with her awakening sensuality and with a growing awareness of her magical powers. This coming-of-age story will captivate older teens.

HEARTBEAT

Sharon Creech, read by Mandy Siegfried (Harper Audio/Recorded Books)
Mandy Siegfried makes this poetry collection a living, glowing story. Her voice is the perfect complement to Creech's simple yet elegant writing, combining youthful emotion and observation, while giving *Heartbeat* the pulse it deserves.

PIRATES!

Celia Rees, read by Jennifer Wiltsie (Listening Library)
Listeners will be enthralled by Jennifer Wiltsie's narration of the exploits of female pirates. An enchanting tale of two brave souls who escape their predetermined stations in life and fight for their freedom.

THE RUBY IN THE SMOKE* THE SHADOW IN THE NORTH*

Philip Pullman, read by Anton Lesser (Listening Library)
Philip Pullman and Anton Lesser deliver a riveting mystery for young adults full of all the underworld villainy and Victorian intrigue that 1870s London can muster. Spellbinding.

More

Find 75 top titles for kids
with links to reviews

at www.audiofilemagazine.com

* Look for reviews of starred titles in this issue

Useful Recommended Lists and Web Sites

American Library Association

ALEX Awards: adult books for YA readers

<http://www.ala.org/ala/yalsa/booklistsawards/alexawards/alexawards.htm>

YALSA: Young Adult audiobook selections

<http://www.ala.org/ala/yalsa/booklistsawards/selectedaudio/05audio.htm>

ALSC: Children's Notable Recordings

<http://www.ala.org/ala/alsc/awardsscholarships/childrensnortable/notablecreclis t/currentnotable.htm>

Capitol Choices: Noteworthy Books & audiobooks for Children

<http://capitolchoices.communitypoint.org>

Jim Trelease, author *The Read Aloud Handbook*: Why Read Aloud?

http://www.trelease-on-reading.com/rah_chpt1_p3.html#meaningful_differences

AudioFile Magazine: Best Kids Audio 2005

<http://www.audiofilemagazine.com/features/bob2005.html>

Publisher Sites for Children's & Young Adult Audiobooks

Audio Bookshelf <http://www.audiobookshelf.com>

BBC Audiobooks America <http://www.bbcaudiobooksamerica.com>

Bolinda Audio <http://www.bolinda.com>

Brilliance Audio <http://www.brillianceaudio.com>

Full Cast Audio <http://www.fullcastaudio.com>

Harper Audio <http://www.harperaudio.com>

L.A. Theater Works <http://www.latw.org>

Listening Library <http://www.listeninglibrary.com>

Live Oak Media <http://www.liveoakmedia.com>

Recorded Books <http://www.recordedbooks.com>

Weston Woods <http://www.westonwoods.com>

AudioFile[®] 
The Magazine for People Who Love Audiobooks

37 Silver St. POB 109 • Portland, ME 04112-0109
TEL 207-774-7563 • FAX 207-775-3744 • E-MAIL RAudioFile@aol.com