

YA

Best of the Best

AudioFile editors compile the year's best audiobooks for children and teens, recognized on two or more notable lists by librarians and teachers from the children's and young adult divisions of the American Library Association, Capitol Choices, and our own Earphones Awards. Find the full list of 75 titles on our Web site, www.audiofilemagazine.com.

  **BOY** by Roald Dahl, read by Derek Jacobi (Harper Audio)

Dahl's practical jokes, trials, and tribulations through boarding schools and his sense of wonder at the world are charming, especially voiced by a master storyteller. Adults and children alike will enjoy this reminiscence as the past comes alive and they are transported to a simpler and more raucous time.

  **CORALINE** by Neil Gaiman, read by the Author (Harper Audio)

When Coraline finds a mysterious corridor in her family's new flat, she must fight sinister forces determined to keep her and her family prisoner forever. Author Gaiman's soft-spoken voice lends to the overall darkness of the story, and his reading will leave teen and adult listeners alike captivated. Music from The Gothic Archies adds to an already haunting tale.

  **BREATHING UNDERWATER** by Alex Flinn, read by Jon Cryer (Listening Library)

Charged with physical violence against his girlfriend, Nick is ordered to attend Mario Ortega's Family Violence class and to keep a journal. Jon Cryer brilliantly captures Nick's surly, sullen tone and the anger burning beneath the surface. Cryer's pacing is spot-on as he rides the roller coaster of Nick's fury, passion, lust, and yearning.

   **FEATHER BOY** by Nicky Singer, read by Philip Franks (Listening Library)

Robert is the kid who never gets picked for the team, the one bullies swarm to. The story of his salvation is touching and deeply felt, and Philip Franks is outstanding, delving deeply into the emotions of the characters. Franks also brings out Robert's humor splendidly.

  **THE JOURNEY** by Sarah Stewart, read by Daisy Egan (Live Oak Media)



Daisy Egan delightfully juxtaposes spunky Hannah's two very different worlds—her breathless excitement amid the crazy, lonely bustle of the city and her homesickness for the peaceful, supportive community of home. Classical music pieces, perfectly suited to Hannah's moods and environment, enhance the story and illustrations.

   **LOVE, RUBY LAVENDER** by Deborah Wiles, read by Judith Ivey (Listening Library)

It's hard to imagine a better book for audio narration than this charming, funny, and deeply touching novel of life in the small town of Halleluia, Mississippi. Ruby will charm you with her brash enthusiasm and down-home sincerity.

  **THE MAGICIAN'S NEPHEW** by C.S. Lewis, read by Kenneth Branagh (Harper Audio)

Two children in Victorian England unwittingly take part in the (re)birth of the magical land of Narnia. Kenneth Branagh's precise and enchanting reading takes the listener from the rooftops of London to the fields of Narnia. Lewis's storytelling is magnificent, and Branagh's performance is completely and utterly engaging.

  **MANIAC MAGEE** by Jerry Spinelli, read by S. Epatha Merkerson (Listening Library)

Orphaned at 3 and raised by hateful relatives, Jeffrey Lionel Magee finally runs away—and lands in Two Mills, Pennsylvania. So begins the legend of an unflappable boy who makes a difference because he doesn't allow himself to be ruled by others' prejudices and expectations. S. Epatha Merkerson's superb rendering gives all the characters strength, individuality, and attitude.

ALSC 2003 Notable Children's Recordings

Librarians from the ALSC division of the American Library Association painstakingly select the Notable Recordings recommendations each year. Music programs, as well as spoken word and audiobooks, are included in the titles aimed at children under 12.

www.ala.org/alsc/nrecord03.html

YALSA 2003 Young Adult Audiobook Selections

A committee of young adult librarians and teachers select audiobook titles for a biannual list, under the auspices of YALSA, a division of the American Library Association.

www.ala.org/yalsa/booklists/audio/2003audio.html



KIDS AUDIO 2003



   **SAFFY'S ANGEL** by Hilary McKay, read by Julia Sawalha (Listening Library)

Saffy finds out she is adopted, but a mysterious angel left to her by her grandfather may yet provide her with proof of her place in the family. The marriage between McKay's charming novel and narrator Julia Sawalha is a sublime listening experience. Sawalha presents the loving and memorable family with an abundance of humor and warmth.

  **SEEK** by Paul Fleischman, performed by a Full Cast (Listening Library)

Rob scours the airwaves seeking his father's voice. This multicaast production is a brilliant tapestry of sounds, weaving the sounds of Rob's mother's singing, his grandfather's Marxist slogans, stray dialogue from Hispanic soap operas, an album of Louisiana bayou sound effects, and of course, the many sounds of radio.

  **SILVER ON THE TREE** by Susan Cooper, read by Alex Jennings (Listening Library)

Alex Jennings brings his vocal talents to Susan Cooper's final installment of the Dark Is Rising series. Jennings helps create a willing suspension of disbelief. He is a master of dialogue, slipping effortlessly into the cadences of children's voices and characterizing accents from around the British Isles and beyond.

   **A SINGLE SHARD** by Linda Sue Park, read by Graeme Malcolm (Listening Library)

Set in twelfth-century Korea, *A Single Shard* is the story of orphaned Tree-ear, who dreams of becoming a Master Potter like the ill-tempered artist, Min, he so admires. British actor Graeme Malcolm gives his reading admirable dignity.

  **SON OF THE MOB** by Gordon Korman, read by Max Casella (Listening Library)



When Vince Luka tells folks his father is in the vending machine business, he's not talking soda cans. Luka Senior is a kingpin of the Mob. Max Casella shoots Korman's words out as fast as a machine gun, and the speed is dead-on for this breezy, dark comedy.

  **A STEP FROM HEAVEN** by An Na, read by Jina Oh (Listening Library)

The Korean-born protagonist recreates scenes of her childhood as an immigrant as she tries to adjust to American ways and remain a good Korean daughter despite her father's alcoholism and abuse. Jina Oh reads the poetic prose with a simplicity that underscores the emotional turmoil and pain of this story.

  **TIME STOPS FOR NO MOUSE** by Michael Hoeye, read by Campbell Scott (Listening Library)

The adventures of Hermux Tantamoq, watchmaker mouse, are told with bubbling good humor by Campbell Scott. Danger, romance, and many a chuckle abound as Hermux quests after a mysteriously attractive aviatrix (mouse) who visits his watch shop. A superb choice for family listening in the spirit of *Redwall* and *The Wind in the Willows*.

  **TROY** by Adèle Geras, read by Miriam Margolyes (Listening Library)

In an ambitious retelling of the story of the Trojan War, Geras lets the young people of King Priam's household spin out the tale. Margolyes is an unquestionable master here. She makes it possible for listeners to follow this multilayered saga with an astute performance.

Find the full list of **75** titles at www.audiofilemagazine.com

Capitol Choices

A group of teachers and librarians in the metropolitan district of Washington, D.C., Maryland, and Virginia create this annual list of audiobook titles.

www.capitolchoices.org



AudioFile Earphones

Exceptional audiobooks are nominated to receive the Earphones Award by individual reviewers and confirmed by AudioFile editors. Narrative voice and style, vocal characterizations, enhancement of text, and suitability for the audio format are criteria used for these recommendations.

