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The Remarkable Farkle McBride



Synopsis

Reedle-ee Rootle-ee Vroom-pety BANG! Young Farkle McBride is a musical genius: He plays the violin, the flute, the trombone, and the drums with incredible skill. But he's never satisfied:

Something is missing. In his first book, actor and musician John Lithgow introduces a memorable character, a fickle yet lovable child prodigy who brings the sounds and rhythms of an orchestra to sprawling visual life. With a double gatefold showing the entire orchestra, this is the ultimate book for the music lover in all of us. Deedle-ee Doodle-ee Doom-pety CLANG!

Book Information

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Age Range: 5 - 8 years

Grade Level: Preschool - 3

Customer Reviews

Star of 3rd Rock from the Sun, actor John Lithgow is less well known as a music enthusiast, but in his comical verse story *The Remarkable Farkle McBride*, he has created the musical prodigy he would perhaps like to have been. Farkle is a little boy with astounding talents (he's playing violin with the orchestra by the age of 3) but little perseverance. Each year he gets bored with his instrument, takes up and masters a new one, and then gets bored with that. Of his recently beloved trombone, he says, "The racket is more than my eardrums can bear! So return it or throw it away! I don't care!" In the end, Farkle realizes that the whole orchestra is his instrument: he finds satisfaction as a conductor, and the book ends with a gatefold of him triumphantly leading all the other musicians. C.F. Payne's illustrations combine a Norman Rockwell realism with a caricaturist's sense of humor. (Ages 5 and older) --Richard Farr

No stranger to music (he released a CD for children titled "Singin' in the Bathtub"), actor Lithgow pens a romp of a tale about a prodigy whose quest for the perfect instrument leads him through virtually every section of the orchestra. "When Farkle McBride was a three-year-old tyke,/ All freckle-y, bony, and thin,/ He astonished his friends and his family alike/ By playing superb violin." After his debut, the easily dissatisfied diminutive genius trades in his fiddle for a flute ("He went Rootle-ee/ Tootle-ee/ Tootle-ee Too/ With all of the winds at his side"), then a trombone and subsequently percussion, all to no avail. Not until he steps in for an ill conductor does he find his niche; a gatefold spread shows him ("satisfied!") in front of "all the instruments he ever tried." Lithgow's nimble verse with a limerick's beat sparkles as he introduces readers to the various instruments and their sounds. Payne's outrageously droll mixed media illustrations, with their blend of caricature and realism, recall Kathryn Hewitt's work in *Lives of the Musicians*. Although Farkle is remarkably difficult to please, his tale may well strike a chord with anyone who's ever made overtures at musicianship. Ages 4-8. Copyright 2000 Reed Business Information, Inc.

I'm very skeptical of children's books written by celebrities, but John Lithgow has written a **REMARKABLE** children's book with **FARKLE MCBRIDE**. This book is a tremendous amount of fun. It's a great read-aloud. I read it to my kids, who immediately made me read it to them again and again. And, really, it was my pleasure. The illustrations are excellent and the fold out spread at the back is a real treat! Bravo!

Update: Ok, it's become a total winner. My son loves it! After reading it, watch the video online of John Lithgow reading the book with accompanying music. **BIG hit.** Original review: Cute enough book. I wanted more children's books to introduce musical instruments to my 2 year old and it's ok for that purpose. The faces are a little weird at times, but it's fun for the most part. He does get angry and destroy his instruments, which makes me cringe a bit...

John Lithgow's book is a favorite!

As a music teacher, I adore this book! Use it every fall to introduce orchestra instruments to my elementary students. They love it!! Good moral lesson too.

This is my favorite children's book!

I read this book to classes its first and second grade students at the school where I taught band instruments for many years. The illustrations are fabulous and the story is really neat. The kids loved the book and it was a great way for me to introduce myself to the younger children in my school. It was also a subtle recruiting tool for my program.

Farkle McBride is a musical genius. At the age of three he plays the violin. At five it's the flute, at seven the trombone, and at nine he's mastered percussion. However, Farkle is never quite satisfied and destroys each of his instruments a year after mastering them. It isn't until he's ten that he realizes that what he loves best is hearing all the instruments together and is called upon to conduct an orchestra. Lithgow has a wonderful sense of rhyme and the onomatopoeia is a delight. C.F. Payne's illustrations are beautiful and his Farkle looks rather similar to a young John Lithgow. Kids enjoy listening to the book and if you really want to read into it, it's filled with lessons. For example, the book introduces children to the wondrous sounds of an orchestra and it illustrates that it's good to try new things and keep learning. I didn't not like the fact that Farkle destroys every instrument he owned. That illustrates the Farkle is basically a spoiled brat whose parents obey his every whim. Of course, that whole characteristic of Farkle could be used as a lesson, too. Then again, maybe Lithgow never intended for there to be any lessons in the book. Some books, after all, are just fun to read in and of themselves. In that case, it's a very fun and entertaining story to read.

I teach general music in an elementary school in Tennessee. I bought a copy of this book for myself and one for the other music teacher on the strength of a recommendation from a facilitator in a professional development workshop I attended in May. My team mate said she once had a copy of this book at another school she'd taught in but lost it, so she was thrilled to have it back in her classroom library. She said the story draws the students in and fires their imagination to ask questions all during the time she reads it aloud. She mentioned it is especially effective to engage the boys with----which speaks volumes about the value of this book!! I plan to use it with 2-4th grades starting in the upcoming school year. I found the seller took a bit longer to ship the book than I'd wanted, but at least I had it in my hands before we let out for the summer!

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