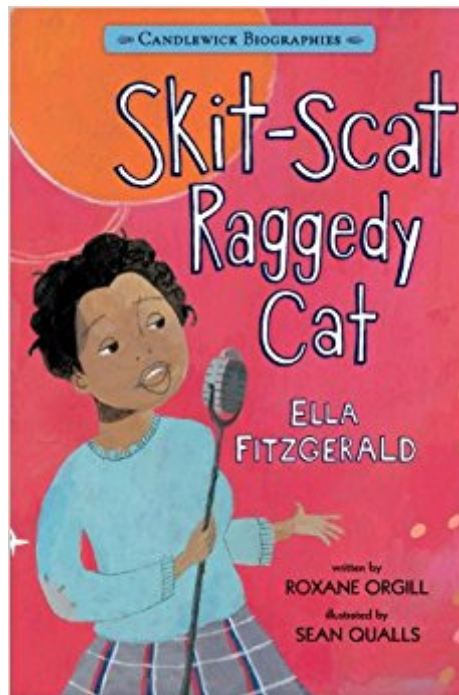




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# Skit-Scat Raggedy Cat: Candlewick Biographies: Ella Fitzgerald



## Synopsis

A swinging bio of young Ella Fitzgerald, who pushed through the toughest of times to become one of America's most beloved jazz singers. When Ella Fitzgerald danced the Lindy Hop on the streets of 1930s Yonkers, passersby said good-bye to their loose change. But for a girl who was orphaned and hungry, with raggedy clothes and often no place to spend the night, small change was not enough. One amateur night at Harlem's Apollo Theater, Ella made a discovery: the dancing beat in her feet could travel up and out of her mouth in a powerful song—and the feeling of being listened to was like a salve to her heart. With lively prose, Roxane Orgill follows the gutsy Ella from school-girl days to a featured spot with Chick Webb's band and all the way to her number-one radio hit "A-Tisket, A-Tasket." Jazzy mixed-media art by illustrator Sean Qualls brings the singer's indomitable spirit to life.

## Book Information

Lexile Measure: 820L (What's this?)

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Average Customer Review: 4.3 out of 5 stars 10 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #351,223 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #14 in Books > Children's

Books > Arts, Music & Photography > Music > Jazz #90 in Books > Children's Books >

Biographies > Musical #308 in Books > Children's Books > Biographies > Women

Age Range: 8 - 12 years

Grade Level: 3 - 7

## Customer Reviews

"Although I'd known Ella Fitzgerald's singing for ages, I didn't

get her until I saw a film clip of her singing "A-Tisket,

A-Tasket" standing in the aisle of a bus. She was both guileless child and determined adult, a combination I had never encountered in all the singers I had known or researched."

•Roxane OrgillRoxane Orgill is an award-winning writer on music and the author of several biographies for young readers, including MAHALIA: A LIFE IN GOSPEL MUSIC AND FOOTWORK: THE STORY OF FRED AND ADELE ASTAIRE. She is also the author of DREAM LUCKY, a book for adults about big-band jazz, race, and politics in the 1930s. She lives in New York City.Sean Qualls is the illustrator of many books for children, including DIZZY; BEFORE JOHN WAS A JAZZ GIANT: A SONG OF JOHN COLTRANE; THE POET SLAVE OF CUBA: A BIOGRAPHY OF JUAN FRANCISCO MONZANO; and PHILLIS'S BIG TEST. He lives in Brooklyn.

Great story

Nice book for kids

Wonderful book for a young library

Narrative very entertaining

While browsing the exhibits at the American Library Association Conference last week I discovered this neat little paperbound book on one of my favorite jazz vocalists Ella Fitzgerald. Apparently the book was published in hardback in 2010 but this is the later paperback version. One of most overlooked Ella CDs is one for kids that I reviewed a few years back. I used it to introduce friends' children to her amazing scat singing (and swinging; Ella could swing with the best of them!). Author Roxanne Orgill, tells Ella's story from the first time she heard a Boswell Sisters record when she was about eight years old, and fell in love with swing music, until she was hired by the drummer and bandleader Chick Webb in 1938. (The book ends just before Webb died in 1939 and the band's name was changed to Ella and her Famous Orchestra). The narrative is written so it can be easily read by a parent as a child the book is aimed at ages 6 to 10 and can see the colorful illustrations. The author quotes from three songs that Ella sang during those years. This could easily be an "interactive" reading if the parent were to download Ella's 1938 hit record "A-Tisket, A-Tasket" and play the recording after the story ends. It the kind of catchy number that kids love and just could lead to a new generation of Ella fans. The book includes, not only an index (though I'm not sure that serves much purpose),

but a bibliography of other children's books on Ella, some SERIOUS and expensive reference books about her, and a well-chosen "selected further listening" section. This book has a list price of under \$5.00 and is certainly an affordable start to a jazz music education. As a music journalist, well-versed in jazz, I'm impressed with the whole package. I hope you found this review both informative and helpful. Steve Ramm "Anything Phonographic"

From its energetic cover to the lyric writing style ("Ella was a rough-tough raggedy cat on the outside , but inside she was milky and silky and soft and shy"(13).) this 42 page book introduces young readers (I'd say it's perfect for readers 8-12) to Ella Fitzgerald. I was impressed at how the author handled some delicate issues, keeping in mind her audience. Ella had a rough childhood and run ins with the law. When her mother dies, Ella is left with her mom's boyfriend, who "didn't treat her kindly"(10). Without ignoring the issues, the author doesn't overwhelm the reader with them. This book is a gorgeous mix of lilting phrase and funky, lively illustration that reminds me of Jacob Lawrence's artistic style. I notice in another review that book got a music teacher's stamp of approval, which makes me feel even more confident in recommending it to older elementary and early middle school readers. It shows that hard work and talent (and luck, which you might have to make yourself) can take you where you want to go. About me: I'm a middle school/high school librarian How I got this book: sent to me by the publisher

I'm an elementary music teacher who uses the Share the Music textbook series. There is a great listening clip of Ella Fitzgerald singing a Tisket a Tasket in the Valentine's Day section of the first grade book. For years I have struggled to find something online for my students to look at to learn more about Ella Fitzgerald than the 2 sentences in the student books. This book is just what I needed! It is written at their level and ties into what the students have been doing in other classes to celebrate black history month. Music teacher approved!

Definitely would not recommend buying this book for the little ones. I thought it was inappropriate for Roxane Orgills to speak of Ella as being 'not pretty' and having raggedy clothes, a big mouth, and squinty eyes, but 'she sure could dance!' Not at all. Not good for black babies needing see positive reflections of themselves in literature and life period. If you are going to be a non-black person writing a book on a black musicians, regardless of how much you know about their music, you really

need to keep your white lens of the world out of it.

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