

## Bookstorm™

*Giant Pumpkin Suite*, written by Melanie Heuiser Hill, Candlewick Press, 2017.

Many readers enjoy books about communities of people who play together, work together, tackle projects together ... and sometimes make an effort to get along. We call these “neighborhood” books.

Here, then, are books, videos, and websites that we believe will inspire you to immerse yourself in the neighborhood of *Giant Pumpkin Suite*.



### COMPLEMENTARY BOOKS, MUSIC, and VIDEOS

#### Bach, Johann Sebastian

Videos: “Yo-Yo Ma Bach Cello Suite No. 1 in G Major. At the BBC Proms in 2015. Listen to this to hear (and see) what Rose aspires to with all of her practicing. 18:18 minutes. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rGgG-0lOJjk>

If you would like to listen for variations in playing styles among three top cello players, this is Pau Casals <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wqhR37qSUMA> and this is Mischa Maisky <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mGQLXRTI3Z0>

*Bach's Goldberg Variations*, written by Anna Harwell Celenza, illustrated by Joann E. Kitchel, Charlesbridge, 2016.

A fictionalized story of the composition of the Goldberg Variations, told through the eyes of a young student of Bach's, Johann Gottlieb Goldberg. The author is a music professor at Georgetown University who has based this “guess” on extensive research about the naming of the *The Keyboard Practice Consisting of an Aria with Thirty Variations for the Harpsichord*,” otherwise called the Goldberg Variations. Written for the primary grades, this will nonetheless provide a good background about Johann Sebastian Bach.

*Becoming Bach*, written and illustrated by Tom Leonard, Roaring Brook Press, 2017.

The illustrations shine in this picture book, which relays the 200-year Bach family history that created the ideal environment for Johannes Sebastian Bach to become Bach. The book examines patterns in Bach's music.



*Getting to Know the World's Greatest Composers: Johann Sebastian Bach*, written and illustrated by Mike Venezia, Scholastic, originally published in 1999, reissued in 2017.

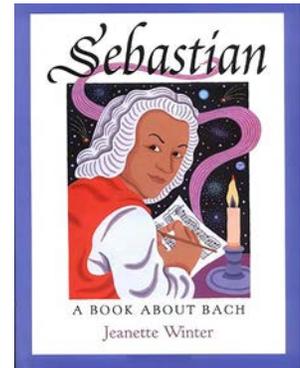
A lighthearted but factual overview of Bach's life, style, and music.

*Lives of the Musicians: Good Times, Bad Times (and What the Neighbors Thought)*, written by Kathleen Krull, illustrated by Kathryn Hewitt, Harcourt, 2013.

Bach's story is included in this book on four pages, featuring his music and his "personal characteristics that make his life so interesting."

*Sebastian: a Book about Bach*, written and illustrated by Jeanette Winter, Harcourt, 1999.

Spare text and acrylic paintings portray Bach's life as a young child. Written for primary grades, this would be useful as a mentor text for students to write their own biographies.



## The Cello

**Music:** "Andante," a Bach cello piece played atop a mountain is as exhilarating as you'd expect, cellist Ruth Boden, *Aeon*, Aeon Media Group.

<https://aeon.co/videos/a-bach-cello-piece-played-atop-a-mountain-is-as-exhilarating-as-you-d-expect>

**Music:** "Only Children Weep," from "After reading *To Kill a Mockingbird*" (Five Movements for Cello and Piano), composed by Martin Hennessy, performed by cellist Raman Ramakrishnan and pianist Martin Hennessy.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yrr9tmlkg4Q>

**Music:** Bach's "Cello Suite No. 3 in C major, BWV 1009," performed by a young Yo-Yo Ma on *Mister Roger's Neighborhood*

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SSMkLVAF0qY>

**Music:** "Leonard Bernstein presents 7-year-old Yo-Yo Ma and Yu Ching Ma's high-profile debut for President John F. Kennedy," November 29, 1962.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dNvAUobb1y4>

*The Cello of Mr. O*, written by Jane Cutler, illustrated by Greg Couch, Dutton Books, 2001.

In a city besieged by war, a young girl tells us about seeing daily bombs and tracer fire, her father off fighting in the mountains, and the hardships of not having enough food or fuel. In her apartment building, an older man plays his cello. It's a beautiful story that helps young children understand more about war from the viewpoint of a child their age.

## Charlotte's Web

Website: Harper & Brothers originally published this book in 1952. With its worldwide readership, HarperCollins maintains a website for Charlotte's Web with available resources. <http://bit.ly/2vSdKEV>

*Charlotte's Web*, written by E.B. White, HarperCollins (Harper & Brothers), 1952.

*Some Pig. Humble. Radiant.* These are the words in Charlotte's Web, high up in Zuckerman's barn. Charlotte's spider web tells of her feelings for a little pig named Wilbur, who simply wants a friend. They also express the love of a girl named Fern, who saved Wilbur's life when he was born the runt of his litter.

*Some Writer!: The Story of E.B. White*, written and illustrated by Melissa Sweet, HMH Books, 2016.



A fabulous biography about the author of *Charlotte's Web*, Elwyn Brooks White, with collaged and written source materials from the family and research holdings. Highly recommended.

## Giant Pumpkins

Video: "Giant Pumpkins," from The Three-Minute Gardener. Penn State Public Broadcasting. Shows all the parts of the Giant Pumpkin plant, stems, vines, male flowers, female flowers, and how to pollinate. This is a must-see for your students. 3:52 minutes. [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hJ4Z\\_RdgvGU](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hJ4Z_RdgvGU)

Video: "How to Grow a Giant Pumpkin," Tamil Nature TV, 2017. This is a good video for showing how the seeds are selected, prepared (they're sanded!), propagated, and eventually planted in the soil. Filmed on an Ohio farm. 11:56 minutes. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3-d99z3iVDA>

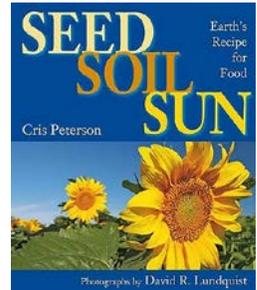
*Backyard Giants: the Passionate, Heartbreaking, and Glorious Quest to Grow the Biggest Pumpkin Ever*, written by Susan Warren, Bloomsbury, 2008.

This one gets high marks from giant pumpkin growers for its spot-on portrayal of the competitive track and its readability. "The competition is furious; there's sabotage and treachery and the heartbreak of root rot, and many a weigh-off ends in tears. This year, more than just the grand prize is at stake."

“How to Grow a (Record-Setting?) Giant Pumpkin,” written by Brian Barth, *Modern Farmer*, October 26, 2015.

This is a step-by-step description of finding the seeds, preparing your soil, planting your seeds, and “coaxing a giant.” Well written! A good example of writing a list as a mentor text.

*Seed, Soil Sun.: Earth’s Recipe for Food*, written by Cris Peterson, photographs by David R. Lundquist, Boyds Mills Press, 2010.



Intended for younger readers, this is a good introduction to the growing cycle for urban children and those who might be unfamiliar with how crops are grown for food in the United States.

“The Secret to Growing the World’s Largest Pumpkin,” written by Maya Wei-Haas for *Smithsonian* magazine, October 30, 2015.

The secret? “Number one is genetics, number two is genetics, number three is genetics. And then number four you’ve got sun, warmth, fertilizer and water,” [George Hamilton, University of New Hampshire] says.” <http://www.smithsonianmag.com/science-nature/surprising-science-giant-pumpkins-180957099>

*Wisconsin Farm Lore: Kicking Cows, Giant Pumpkins, and Other Tales from the Back Forty*, written by Martin Hintz, The History Press, 2012.

Written for adults but certainly readable by children, we walk along with Mr. Hinz as he travels through Wisconsin. Along the way, he thumps a 1,810 pound giant pumpkin.

## Japanese Tea Ceremony

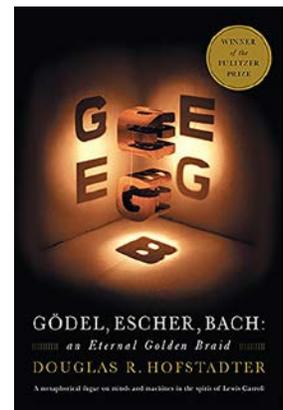
Video: “Japanese Tea Ceremony” Tea at Koken,” filmed in the mountains of Colorado by Smokemuse. 9:16 minutes. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7tt7NBIVeMY>

## Mathematics and Bach

It is often said that Johannes Sebastian Bach was a “mathematical” composer. For students interested in math, here are a few links that will challenge them to describe what is meant by this.

*Gödel, Escher, Bach: An Eternal Golden Braid* by Douglas Hofstadter, Basic Books, 1979.

A book written for adults, it’s so fascinating that you may have one or more students who will work their way through the book.



Douglas Hofstadter's book is concerned directly with the nature of "maps" or links between formal systems. However, according to Hofstadter, the formal system that underlies all mental activity transcends the system that supports it. If life can grow out of the formal chemical substrate of the cell, if consciousness can emerge out of a formal system of firing neurons, then so too will computers attain human intelligence. *Gödel, Escher, Bach* is a wonderful exploration of fascinating ideas at the heart of cognitive science: meaning, reduction, recursion, and much more.

This set of answers to "What is meant by Bach was a mathematical composer?" on *Quora*, features answers from musicians, professors, and students. Your intrigued student might compare the answers to determine which one has enough factual research to back it up.

**<https://www.quora.com/What-is-meant-by-%E2%80%9CBach-was-a-mathematical-composer%E2%80%9D>**

"Deconstructing the Genius of Bach," Philip Clark, *Limelight Magazine*, Sep 6, 2013.

Subtitled "How the Baroque master used maths, physics, and the power of God to create music of stunning complexity. This quote from Christopher Hogwood might generate an interesting discussion or paper about "contemporary music" then and now.

"All music then was contemporary music," [Hogwood] explains. "You wrote to be played tomorrow and you forgot about it the day after. It was very immediate and if there was no performance, or the opportunity suddenly collapsed, you simply stopped writing. People didn't want to hear something that was a year old, certainly not ten years old, and never a century old. Composers were workers, employed on the same terms as the cook, or the coachman, or the gardener. You didn't always require to know the name of the gardener, but if you became a well-known gardener people might come to look at your garden in the same way people came to Venice to hear Vivaldi. But very few people came to hear Bach. He never got a top job and was isolated - and knew it."

"Bach and the Musical Möbius Strip," by Tony Phillips, *Plus Magazine*, Nov 25, 2016, reprinted from the American Mathematical Society column published in 2015.

**<https://plus.maths.org/content/topology-music-m-bius-strip>**

Here are more ideas for your mathematically inclined students to examine. This one discusses Bach's canons and compares them to a two-sided Möbius strip.

This is just the beginning of the research that can be done into Bach and mathematics. Have we whet your curiosity?

## Movie Musicals

There are many types of musicals on film, ranging from *Spinal Tap* to *Shrek: the Musical*. In *Giant Pumpkin Suite*, Janie and Mrs. Lukashenko love the musicals – and the music – from the movies of the 1940s and 1950s. Here are just three of them:

*Oklahoma!*, by Rogers & Hammerstein, starring Gordon Macrae, Shirley Jones, Rod Steiger, and Gloria Grahame.

Set in the Oklahoma Territory in the early 1900s, this joyous celebration of frontier life is a story of tender romance. Gordon MacRae is Curly, a sunny, good-natured ranch hand, and Shirley Jones is Laurey Williams, the farmer's daughter he loves. Rod Steiger is the menacing Jud, who tries to come between them. Good for more mature children.

*Singin' in the Rain*, by Warner Brothers, starring Gene Kelly, Debbie Reynolds, and Donald O'Connor.

Considered to be one of the all-time movie musical classics, Gene Kelly is a Hollywood star of the silent era who finds his career jeopardized when he and his shrill-voiced leading lady must appear in a talkie together.

*State Fair*, by Rogers & Hammerstein, either the version with Jeanne Crain and Dana Andrews or the version with Pat Boone and Ann-Margaret.

The Frakes, a farming family, go to the Iowa State Fair to show the father's prize hog, Blue Boy, and enjoy the big event of the year. On the first day, both sourpuss daughter Margy and her brother Wayne find new romance, as does Blue Boy. The story centers on young people in their twenties, but this is good family film.

## Music Competitions (Fiction)

*The Facts and Fictions of Minna Pratt*, Patricia MacLachlan, HarperCollins,

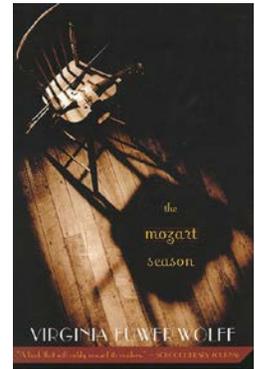
“Fact and fiction are different truths.” That’s the quote taped over Minna’s mother’s writing desk and it confuses Minna. A technically excellent cellist, Minna wants to find her vibrato, which is frustratingly elusive. A new boy joins her chamber group. Lucas plays a viola and he has his vibrato. They are different but they become friends. It’s a straightforward story, much like Minna herself, but one that readers will find holds their attention.

*Midnight Hour Encores*, Bruce Brooks, HarperCollins, 1987

Sibilance T. Spooner, at age 16, believes herself to be a gifted cellist. So does the world around her. Given up by her mother on the day she was born, Sib has lived with her unconventional father, Taxi, for all of her life. She asks him to drive her to meet her mother, knowing that this might drive a wedge between her and the parent who has always been there for her. Their car trip provides time for Taxi to open up about the life he led in the late '60s and the importance of music in his life.

*Mozart Season*, Virginia Euwer Wolff, Henry Holt, 1991. The Phoenix Award.

Allegra Leah Shapiro is about to switch from seventh-grade softball to a summertime of study the violin when her teacher tells her she has been selected as a finalist in a youth competition, which changes the whole complexion of her summer. How will all the odd occurrences of her summer find themselves in Allegra's interpretation of the concerto? This is a beautiful, unforgettable book.



*Second Fiddle*, written by Rosanne Parry, Random House Books for Young Readers, 2011.

Three girls, living in Berlin on a military base at the time when the Berlin Wall was dismantled, travel on their own to take part in a music competition in Paris. They've witnessed a Soviet soldier being severely beaten by his comrades and the only way they can figure out how to save his life is to have him impersonate their music teacher at a chamber music ensemble competition in Paris. Exciting!

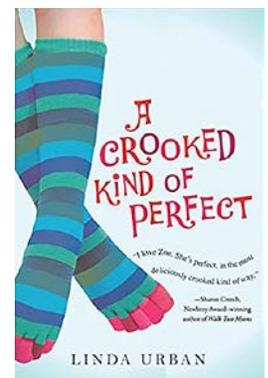
*Worst Band in the Universe*, Graeme Base, Harry N. Abrams, 1999.

On the imaginary world of Blipp, thirteen-year-old Sprocc composes original compositions for his Splingtanger (similar to a guitar). But creativity and innovation are stifled on Blipp, where traditional music is revered. Sprocc eventually leaves his home planet to enter a competition for The Worst Band in the Universe (the most creative band). Eventually, Sprocc and his fellow musicians return to Blipp to create a musical revolution. There's a CD of the competition included.

## Music in Middle Grade Books

*Crooked Kind of Perfect*, written by Linda Urban, HMH Books, 2007.

Zoe Elias has a mother who is never home and a father who refuses to leave home. Ever. The odds are stacked against her. But that doesn't stop her from dreaming of playing the piano at Carnegie Hall. Fortunately for Zoe, her father is listening. Unfortunately, he's easily distracted and that's how Zoe ends up the proud new owner of the Perfectone D-60 organ. Now not only is she stuck playing the organ, but suddenly there's the Perfect-O-Rama Annual Organ Competition.



*Hiding Out at the Pancake Palace*, written by Nan Marino, Roaring Brook Press, 2013.

11-year-old Elvis Ruby is headed straight for the top, via the reality show “Tween Star.” But on the big night, with millions of people watching, something goes horribly wrong. Actually, *everything* goes horribly wrong. Now Elvis has changed his appearance (and his trademark hair) in order to hide out from the paparazzi and flip pancakes at his aunt and uncle’s Piney Pete’s Pancake Palace. But the town oddball Cecelia threatens to blow his cover. And Cecelia has her own agenda, centered around a family legend, and the strange music coming from the woods. Sometimes real life is even stranger than what you see on TV.

*Way to Stay in Destiny*, written by Augusta Scattergood, National Geographic, 2007.

Theo Thomas has two passions: baseball and piano. Ripped from his life on his grandparents’ farm, and plunked down in Destiny, Florida with his cantankerous Vietnam vet uncle, Theo’s not sure how he’s going to survive past the sixth grade. But then there’s Miss Sister and her piano, and Anabel and her Hank Aaron project, and suddenly Destiny might not be so bad after all. As long as his uncle doesn’t find out what he’s up to.

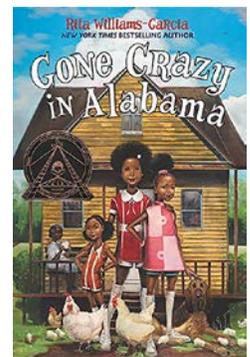
## Neighborhood Books

*Anne of Green Gables*, written by Lucy Maud Montgomery, L.C. Page, 1908. Numerous later editions are available.

Whether you’ve read the series of books or watched one of the movies, you may know that Anne is smart, inquisitive, helpful, and has a temper. She is very involved with the neighbors near her adopted home on Prince Edward Island, and many of them come to love her as much as her readers do!

*Gone Crazy in Alabama*, written by Rita Williams-Garcia, Amistad, 2015.

Delphine, Vonetta, and Fern travel from their home in Brooklyn to Alabama to visit their grandmother, great-grandmother, and their family. There’s a family mystery to uncover and of course Delphine can’t resist digging into it. It’s an absorbing book, by turns funny and sad, but always a compelling story.



*It Ain’t So Awful, Falafel*, written by Firoozeh Dumas, Clarion Books, 2016.

Cindy Yousefzadeh has moved with her family to Newport Beach, their fourth house in the United States. It’s the late 1970s and the Hostage Crisis happens, which makes Cindy fearful of how her friends and neighbors will react. Her family, her friends, even her neighbors surprise her. It’s a book filled with humor and good story-telling.

*The Great Gilly Hopkins*, written by Katherine Paterson, Thomas Crowell, 1979. National Book Award for Children's Literature. Newbery Honor book.

Gilly is eleven. She's been bounced around from foster family to foster family until she has no patience and no graces. She's determined that her mother will finally come to rescue her. When Child Welfare sends her to live with the Trotters, she's completely unprepared for this strange conglomeration of house members and neighbors. Could this be where Gilly was meant to be?

*The Saturdays*, written by Elizabeth Enright, Farrar & Rinehart, 1941. Many later editions available.

In a comfortable brownstone in New York City, the four Melendy children live with their dad and housekeeper. Ranging in age from thirteen to six, they pool their money for an Independent Saturday Afternoon Adventure Club, which takes them out into their neighborhood exploring and definitely having adventures!

*Stella by Starlight*, by Sharon M. Draper, Atheneum, 2015.

Stella lives in Bumblebee, North Carolina, a small, segregated town. She knows she can go into some stores and not into others. Her community is a vital part of her life and her family's support system. When Stella sees white robes and pointed hats astride horses in the forest at midnight, she does what she can to protect her friends and family. One of the sub-themes in this book is the danger her father and his friends put themselves into in order to vote.

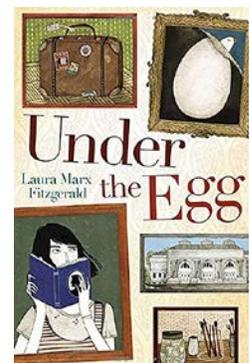


*Tortilla Sun*, by Jennifer Cervantes, Chronicle Books, 2010.

Twelve-year-old Izzy goes to stay with her grandmother for the summer in a remote village in New Mexico. There she learns to make tortillas, listens to the neighbors tell their stories, and hopes to solve the mystery of her late father.

*Under the Egg*, written by Laura Marx Fitzgerald, Dial Books, 2014.

When Theodora Tenpenny spills a bottle of rubbing alcohol on her recently departed grandfather's painting, it appears to have an old Renaissance painting underneath it. Or does it? As Theo tries to solve the mystery, we meet her neighbors and friends, people who will help her solve the mystery of her grandfather's legacy.



*Wishtree*, written by Katherine Applegate,

Told from the viewpoint of Red, a tree who watches over the neighborhood, responding to the wishes people write on cloth and tie to his branches. When a Muslim family moves into Red's neighborhood, not everyone is welcoming. "A compelling and unflinchingly honest treatment of a difficult topic." (*School Library Journal*)

## Tap Dancing

Video: "Buckets and Tap Shoes performing Gumbo Tap," Music Box Theater, Minneapolis, MN, 2009. Rick and Andy Ausland are the tap dancers.

<https://vimeo.com/4754938>

Video: "Tap dancing" James Whiting, in Brisbane, Australia, dances in front of a store. Notice how the two different surfaces produce different sounds.

<https://vimeo.com/38397936>

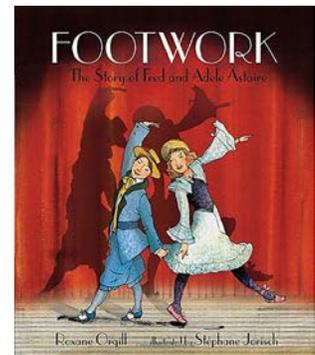
Video: "TedX Potomac Tap Dancing: Luke Spring" Watch young Luke Spring tap dance on the street corner! <https://vimeo.com/11746538>

Movie: "That's Dancing!" a full-length movie featuring famous dancing scenes from the movies. Directed by Jack Haley, Jr. Studio: Warner Brothers. 1985. On DVD.

*Footwork: The Story of Fred and Adele Astaire*, written by Roxane Orgill, illustrated by Stephane Jorisch, Candlewick Press, 2007.

For many years, if you said "tap dance," people thought first of Fred Astaire. Here's the story of how Fred and his sister Adele became tap dancers, beginning as children on the vaudeville stage.

"Mean Feet: the tap-dancing duo who were Fred Astaire's heroes," Judith Mackrell, *The Guardian*, 6 October 2016.



An article about Fayard and Howard Nicholas, who were tap-dancing sensations in vaudeville and the movies. This article includes a 3-minute movie clip which is a must-see for your students (and you!).

*Rap a Tap Tap: Here's Bojangles – Think of That!*, written and illustrated by Leo and Diane Dillon, Blue Sky Press, 2002. Coretta Scott King Illustrator Award.

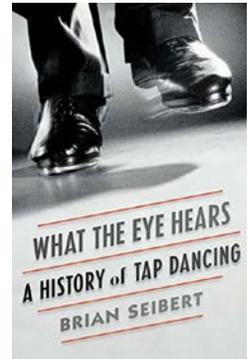
Bill "Bojangles" Robinson (1878-1949), one of the greatest tap dancers of all time. The Dillons create a beautiful book with spare text that captures tap dancing on the 2-D page! "He didn't just dance, he made art with his feet."

*Tap Dancing on the Roof: Sijo Poems*, written by Linda Sue Park, illustrated by Istvan Banyal, Clarion Books, 2007.

Okay, this is a stretchy connection, but it's such a wonderful book of poetry that is accessible and clever, each with a twist at the end. Take advantage of the tap dancing theme in *Giant Pumpkin Suite* to introduce this book of poetry!

*What the Eye Hears: a History of Tap Dancing*, written by Brian Seibert, Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 2015.

Written for adult readers, this is a good book for researching the roots, history, techniques, and personalities of tap dance. His writing style is breezy, so a young reader could find this useful and informative. Seibert is a journalist who writes about dance for national newspapers and magazines so his is an educated, authentic voice.



Visit [Melanie Heuser Hill's website](#) for more information about *Giant Pumpkin Suite*.