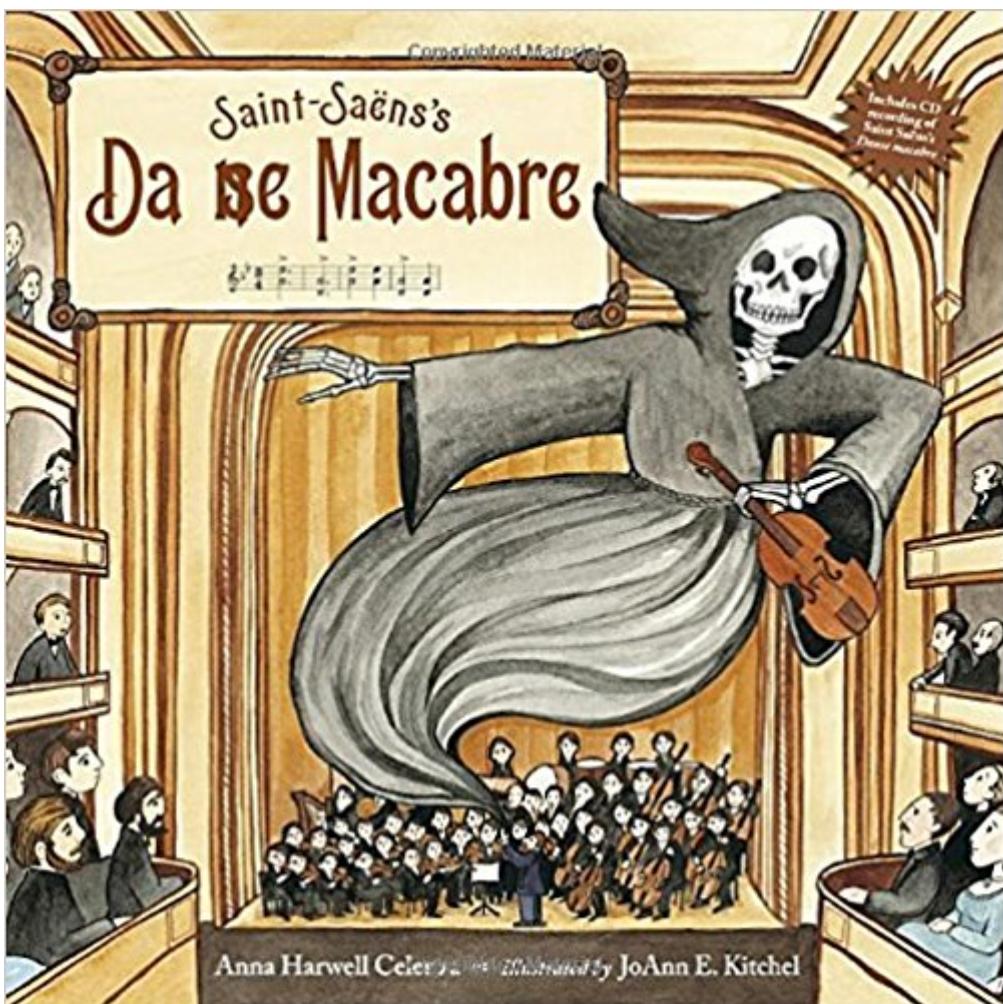


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# Saint-Saëns's Danse Macabre



## **Synopsis**

Camille Saint-Saëns was a brilliant French composer from the nineteenth century. In SAINT-SAËNS'S DANSE MACABRE, readers are transported to France in 1872 when Saint-Saëns visited the catacombs beneath the streets of Paris, known best as the final resting place of victims of the French Revolution. It was in this underground graveyard that Camille found the inspiration to compose Danse macabre, his spooky, mischievous masterpiece. Early performances of what would become Saint Saëns's most well-known piece were met with brutal criticism. However, the composer paid the naysayers no mindâ "to him, the choice of instrumentation perfectly captured his vision of dancing skeletons, of Maestro Death coming to life. A true story of creativity and belief in oneâ "s own ideas, SAINT-SAËNS'S DANSE MACABRE will inspire the innovative thinker in all of us. Back matter includes an authorâ "s note with a brief summary of the historical events and figures mentioned in the text. A CD recording of Danse macabre is also included.

## **Book Information**

Lexile Measure: 600L (What's this?)

Hardcover: 32 pages

Publisher: Charlesbridge; Rei/Com edition (August 1, 2013)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 157091348X

ISBN-13: 978-1570913488

Product Dimensions: 10.3 x 0.4 x 10.3 inches

Shipping Weight: 1 pounds

Average Customer Review: 4.4 out of 5 stars 7 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #999,306 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #63 in Books > Children's Books > Arts, Music & Photography > Music > History #64 in Books > Children's Books > Education & Reference > History > Central & South America #228 in Books > Children's Books > Biographies > Musical

Age Range: 6 - 9 years

Grade Level: 1 - 4

## **Customer Reviews**

Gr 2-5â "This title in the author's music-appreciation series addresses the origin of Camille Saint-Saëns's symphonic work with a description of the composer's nighttime visit to the Paris

Catacombs with his friend Henri Cazalis. The musical inspiration resulted first in the form of a solo song, and later Saint-Saëns's two-year quest for the perfect instrumental sound to express dancing skeletons rising from their graves. Originally criticized, but later acclaimed, this work is explained in first-performance detail: the first violin tuned to a dissonant interval according to specific instruction in the score, other violins played on the wood of bows, and the addition of a previously little-used instrument, the xylophone. Pen and watercolor illustrations paint 19th-century Paris streets and interiors with single-dimensional faces framing an explosion of skeletal dancing forms during the description of Danse Macabre's first performance in 1875. An author's note and accompanying CD featuring the performance of Lorin Maazel and the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra complete this offering with soaring strings and dissonance, a rattling xylophone, swaying woodwinds, trombones heralding the melody, and the final call of a rooster in the solo oboe "all easily apparent to readers through the author's descriptive text: "Long live the music! Long live the dance." "Mary Elam, Learning Media Services, Plano ISD, TX (c) Copyright 2013. Library Journals LLC, a wholly owned subsidiary of Media Source, Inc. No redistribution permitted.

Anna Harwell Celenza is a musicologist and the author of several books for adults and children regarding music history and the history of art. Her children's books include THE FAREWELL SYMPHONY, PICTURES AT AN EXHIBITION, GERSHWIN'S RHAPSODY IN BLUE, and VIVALDI'S FOUR SEASONS'. Anna lives in Baltimore, Maryland.

Great illustrations and story that I use to compliment listening lessons of this music.

Good read for the elementary kids.

Wonderful book and CD. Perfect for children and age appropriate in illustration and text. Wonderful addition to our home library.

We bought this for my son because he loves "In the Hall of the Mountain King." But this book is really nothing like that one. This one is for a much older group (my son is 5) and it's very historic. It is not interactive like "In the Hall of the Mountain King." I wouldn't recommend.

This book is a great tool to introduce composers to the elementary level.

I love Celenza's books (have them all) and use them in my elementary music classrooms. I'm saving this for the intermediate students. Although most of my primary kids would enjoy the creepiness of all the bones under Paris' streets, I just know there'd be one impressionable kid's parent who would complain. A great October resource for the students who need the visual aspect of the music story.

Great story and good way to teach music appreciation.

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