

NAXOS
AudioBooks

**JUNIOR
CLASSICS**

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**CHILDREN'S
FAVOURITES**

NA233512D

Hans Christian Andersen
**THUMBELINA
AND OTHER FAIRY TALES**

Read by finalists of the **Voice of the Year** competition



1	Thumbelina read by <i>Eleanor Buchan</i>	2:56
2	One night while she lay in her pretty bed...	3:36
3	Thumbelina sailed past many towns...	3:52
4	Near the wood in which she'd been living...	4:12
5	Thumbelina said nothing...	3:26
6	Very soon the springtime came...	2:54
7	When autumn arrived...	3:06
8	At length they reached the warm countries...	4:59
9	The Brave Tin Soldier read by <i>Bob Rollett</i>	2:54
10	When evening came...	3:23
11	Suddenly there appeared a great water-rat...	5:00
12	The Princess and the Pea read by <i>Helen Davies</i>	3:10
13	The Butterfly read by <i>Michael Head</i>	4:32
14	Spring went by...	3:31
15	The Flea and the Professor read by <i>Richard Cuthbertson</i>	3:14
16	The Professor was proud of the flea...	2:54
17	The flea lived with the princess...	4:56
18	The Flying Trunk read by <i>Paul Rew</i>	4:22
19	Then he flew away to the town...	4:14
20	Then the saucepan went on with his story...	5:27

21	The Metal Pig read by <i>Howard Wolfin</i>	5:23
22	As they passed from hall to hall...	4:34
23	It was morning...	5:10
24	Giuseppe went out the next morning...	3:25
25	When evening came and the house door...	4:12
26	Oh what beautiful pictures these were...	5:11
27	The Storks read by <i>Helen Davies</i>	2:51
28	The next day when the children...	2:59
29	Time passed on and the young storks...	3:45
30	Of all the boys in the street...	3:38
31	The Silver Shilling read by <i>Julian McDonnell</i>	3:27
32	Now begins the story as it was afterwards...	5:38
33	A year passed...	3:10
34	The Nightingale read by <i>Elizabeth Rickards</i>	2:43
35	The books travelled all over the world...	3:14
36	As they went along...	4:12
37	One day the Emperor received a large packet...	3:44
38	And after this the real nightingale...	2:15
39	Five years passed...	3:06
40	Suddenly there came through the open window...	4:39

Total time: 2:34:19

THUMBELINA AND OTHER FAIRY TALES

Thumbelina, *The Princess and the Pea* and many other stories are known around the world, for many children grow up with the fairy tales of the Danish writer Hans Christian Andersen. *The Ugly Duckling*, *The Little Mermaid* and *The Little Match Girl*, which are on another Naxos AudioBooks recording (NA201212 ISBN 9626340126), are also very famous.

In fact, Andersen wrote 156 fairy tales during his long life, and although they are mainly for children, adults like hearing them or reading them again and again because they have a special atmosphere... and often are great fun.

So who was Andersen and why did he write these stories? Hans Christian Andersen was born in Odense, Denmark in 1805. His family was very poor, his father being a shoemaker and his mother a washerwoman. His father's name was also Hans Andersen, which is why we use the author's middle name and call him Hans Christian Andersen – to show the difference.

His father believed he was of aristocratic origin – that his real family was a rich and important family in Denmark – though this was never proved. In any case, Hans

Christian's father could read and write (not all shoemakers of the time could do that) and made sure that his son also learned these skills. Even as a young boy, Hans Christian showed talent in writing stories and performing them in puppet shows: his father encouraged him and took him to the theatre.

In his autobiography *The True Story of My Life*, published in 1846, Hans Christian wrote: 'My father gratified me in all my wishes. On Sundays, he made me perspective glasses, theatres, and pictures which could be changed; he read to me from Holberg's plays and the *Arabian Tales*; it was only in such moments as these that I can remember to have seen him really cheerful, for he never felt himself happy in his life.'

Hans Christian was only 11 years old when his father died, and he had to go out to work to bring money into the family. First of all, he was apprenticed to a weaver and tailor, and he also worked in a tobacco factory. But even though he was very young, he was determined to make a career for himself as an actor, singer, writer and performer. He had a beautiful voice, and at the age of 14 travelled to Copenhagen, the

capital of Denmark, to show the world what he could do. He made a name for himself as a performer, and also started to write plays. All were rejected, but it was clear that he had the ability to write.

So, a rich friend paid for him to go to school. Even though he was much older than the other pupils, he worked hard to catch up on his education; in 1828, when he was 23 years old, he went to Copenhagen University.

He continued to write plays and in 1835 his first novel was published, called *The Improvisatore*. Though a novel, it was based on his life – that of a poor boy who through hard work, talent and a bit of luck made his way in life and society. In the same year he published a set of short tales called *Tales, Told for Children*. A few were stories he had heard as a child, but many were his own stories. It was the start of a writing life that was to make him famous across the world.

Some were sad stories, of difficulties and hardships – often overcome through hard work and a clear, good nature. Some were fun, like *The Flea and the Professor* in this collection. Hans Christian Andersen also liked to travel throughout Europe, and this is reflected in stories such as *The Metal Pig*, which he wrote to remind himself of his visits to the beautiful Italian city of Florence.

Some, like *The Emperor's New Clothes*, were fun for children but also for adults, with a moral for them to consider as well.

In these stories, Hans Christian Andersen was following in the tradition of The Brothers Grimm, the German writers whose tales were also very popular at the time. But the Grimms' stories were folk tales which they collected and retold, whereas most of Andersen's stories had new plots.

These fairy stories became so popular that they influenced other great writers of the 19th century, including Charles Dickens and Oscar Wilde. *The Happy Prince and Other Stories* by Oscar Wilde (NA213912 ISBN 9626341394) owes a great debt to Andersen's tales – compare *The Nightingale and The Rose* with Andersen's *The Nightingale*, in this collection. (This story was probably written for the Danish singer Jenny Lind, who was herself called The Nightingale, because she sang so sweetly. Andersen fell in love with her, but Jenny Lind loved him like a brother.)

A sensitive man, he frequently rewrote his memoirs – the version published in 1855 was called *The Fairy Tale of My Life*. Hans Christian Andersen died in 1875, but his works have remained in print as books ever since and have found new life in film and in recordings – such as this one.

Notes by Nicolas Soames

Voice of the Year Competition

The Voice of the Year competition, introduced and sponsored by Naxos AudioBooks and *The Times* books pages, edited by Erica Wagner, took place in spring 2004. Readers without any formal drama training or professional acting experience were invited to send in one recorded reading of a set text (a short extract of either Dickens, Austen or Kenneth Grahame) and one of personal choice.

The judging panel – Martin Jarvis, Juliet Stevenson and Anton Lesser, with John Tydeman, David Timson and Christina Hardyment, audiobook reviewer for *The Times*, under the chairmanship of Naxos AudioBooks' managing director Nicolas Soames, chose the finalists and winner from nearly 1000 entries.

The music on this recording is taken from the NAXOS and MARCO POLO catalogues

GRIEG LYRIC PIECES Balázs Szokolay, Piano	8.550650
GRIEG LYRIC PIECES Balázs Szokolay, Piano	8.553387
MACDOWELL PIANO MUSIC James Barbagallo, Piano	8.223634

Music programmed by Sarah Butcher

Thumbelina – colour print after watercolour by Eugen Siegert (1858-1906)
Photo courtesy: ak-g-images



Eleanor Buchan was born in London where she lives with her parents, publisher Benjamin and novelist Elizabeth, and her brother Adam. She has always enjoyed listening to story tapes and was thrilled to be able to record one herself. Eleanor has worked in a variety of productions ranging from Shakespearean drama to twentieth-century musical theatre. Currently she is studying English Literature at Edinburgh University and plans to apply to drama school after graduating.



Richard Cuthbertson was born in north-east England, moving to London in the 1970s. He has a long career in business communications. Forming his own design and marketing agency in the 1980s this expanded into conferences, exhibitions, film and video, new media, working on projects the world over. Some assignments required writing scripts and screenplays, a particular area of creative interest. This has led naturally to an interest in narration and the power of the spoken word.

He changed direction recently to spend time on creative communications consultancy, a film partnership, writing, and commercial property.



Having entered the *Naxos AudioBooks/Times* Voice of the Year Competition for 'a bit of a giggle', **Helen Davies** was more than a little shocked to find herself among the ten finalists. Now retired, she was a teacher of English for over thirty years so she is no stranger to reading aloud, but found being in the recording studio a very different, but nonetheless a very enjoyable, experience. Apart from reading, Helen enjoys gardening, crossword puzzles, listening to music and swimming.



Michael Head grew up in Wales before the second world war in a family where storytelling was a frequent and important activity. He spent 33 years teaching English and reading regularly to interested and often not so interested audiences in secondary schools, and running a secondary school, and then 11 years at Canterbury Christ Church University College in teacher development and research in schools. His hobbies include singing in two choirs (traditional and a capella jazz), reading publicly, reading, theatre, art and pottery appreciation, indiscriminate and passionate TV watching.



Julian McDonnell was born in London in 1973. He was educated at Highgate School and went on to study philosophy at Manchester University. He makes his living by selling 'The World's Smallest Kite' as well as doing the odd comedy modelling job. He has tried his hand at stand-up comedy and hospital radio but hasn't managed to break into the big time yet. Hopefully his appearance on this CD will be a springboard to success!



Paul Rew is a solicitor whose home is in Ludlow, Shropshire. He has been Legal Director of several international companies including Laura Ashley and Littlewoods. His talent for voices was spotted whilst doing Lenny the Lion impressions at his mother's knee, but his legal career has generally left little space for other performances, though in the 1980s he acted in various leading roles with the American Theatre Company in Brussels. In the UK, Paul has helped the Dog Rose Trust charity in Ludlow with various recordings for the visually impaired, including the award-winning Acoustic Fingerprint Guides to Coventry and Lichfield Cathedrals.



Bob Rollett was born in 1939. BA Leeds 1962, PGCE Leicester 1963. Teacher, then Head of Department, then lecturer in English & Drama for 12 years. Seeking complete change went to live and work on a farm as a Pigman and gained Craftsman's Grade Certificate as such! After two years of that really complete change ... along came another one! Full-time student at Lincoln Theological College. Ordained in the Church of England 1979. Served as a Parish Priest around the Cambridgeshire Fens for 20 years. Obligated to take early retirement because of heart problems, I have now discovered that retirement is my true vocation, time to read, write, garden, woodcarve and walk.



Howard Wolfen as an accomplished pianist, Magic Circle entertainer, amateur actor and humorous songwriter, leads a busy life, both privately and communally. His wife and four children (and grandchildren) a constant priority, he is a Natural Fabrics specialist by day, indulging his many talents outside of the 100-year-old family business. Having caught the bug recording jingles for factory-radio and being dubbed 'one-take Howie' recently by a studio producer, he plans to follow up this latest work for Naxos Audiobooks by further storytelling, narration and voice-overs.

The competition was for amateurs. However, among the (nearly) 1000 entries was a cassette recording which demanded particular attention. In the accompanying letter, Elizabeth Rickards explained that when she made the cassette she hadn't realized that the rules excluded trained actors – until she was actually addressing the package. So she sent it anyway, explaining that she went to RADA in 1946, and hadn't been in the profession for half a century. Technically, she was not eligible, but I felt that this was one case when it was worth bending the rules a bit. And, as a professional actress had slipped through the net into the final rounds, Elizabeth Rickards could take her place on this CD. We are delighted to have this enchanting recording.



Elizabeth Rickards was born in India and went to school in England and America. In 1946 she trained at RADA but in 1955 she decided she had to choose between acting and her husband and family – she chose the latter and has been happily looking after them and gardening ever since.

Hans Christian Andersen

THUMBELINA AND OTHER FAIRY TALES

Read by finalists of the **Voice of the Year** competition

Thumbelina read by Eleanor Buchan • **The Brave Tin Soldier** read by Bob Rollett

The Princess and the Pea • **The Storks** read by Helen Davies

The Butterfly read by Michael Head • **The Flea and the Professor** read by Richard Cuthbertson

The Flying Trunk read by Paul Rew • **The Metal Pig** read by Howard Wolfen

The Silver Shilling read by Julian McDonnell • **The Nightingale** read by Elizabeth Rickards

This delightful selection of stories by one of the classic masters of the genre includes some well-known and lesser-known tales, presented in lively Naxos AudioBooks style with music and sound effects.

This recording is also unique in that the stories are read by the finalists of the Naxos AudioBooks/*The Times* **Voice of the Year** competition, which offered a recording opportunity to talented readers who had never studied or worked professionally. The competition produced some outstanding natural talent, as this recording shows!

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View our catalogue online at
www.naxosaudiobooks.com



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Edited by Sarah Butcher

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