

Abiyoyo Returns

by Pete Seeger and Paul DuBois Jacobs

Illustrated by Michael Hays

Simon & Schuster

Books for Young Readers



Reviewed by
Michelle Swanson

The test of time has proven no challenge for the traditional lullaby, "Abiyoyo," found in the book of the same title, by Pete Seeger published in 1989. In this new boo, the same, giant monster comes back to life. Also returning is the original lullaby song of the Xhosa people of South Africa. Teaming with Paul DuBois Jacobs, Seeger tells of need for the familiar town to bring the ferocious beast back to life in this delightful sequel.

The same townspeople, who freed themselves from the giant 14 years ago, now face the challenge of removing a huge boulder to build a much-needed dam of the nearby river. The only remedy for the town to avoid flooding is to bring the giant back to town and to use his strength to remove the enormous boulder. The father-son combination who originally saved the town from the giant is back in the sequel; both have aged a bit, but still posses their ukulele and magic wand. With a third generation as part of the story, a young girl adds her drum to their family music-making efforts.

The town immediately turns to the magical, musical family for help in bringing the strong giant back. Fearful of the consequences, the family and townspeople prepare to magically have the giant appear, move the huge boulder and then immediately have him disappear again. When the original plans go array, everyone in town learns to deal with the unexpected, to accept

others in spite of differences, and to work together for the common good.

In addition to being an interesting tale, the book can be an instructive tool for meeting many music objectives. The onomatopoeia of the story calls out to music teachers for the addition of non pitched percussion instruments, either with given rhythms or improvisation. The main rhythmic motive is notated within the illustrations and the score for the lullaby is included. The pentatonic melody provides the opportunity for a bordun accompaniment and the triple meter encourages movement.

The colorful illustrations by Michael Hays bring the story to life on the pages. The jagged-edged monster oozes attitude and musical notes flowing out of instruments and voices invite active participation. Students will enjoy both the tale and the music-making opportunities in the book. My only disappointment is the lack of an accompanying story-telling recording. The original book, *Abiyoyo*, has the story on tape, told by James Earl Jones. Not only does Jones' voice tell the tale with excitement, but also the music and singing voices come to life in my classroom.

