

# CHILDREN'S BOOK REVIEW

Reviewed by Julie Froude

## Last Stop on Market Street

Written by Matt de la Peña

Illustrated by Christian Robinson

New York, NY: G.P. Putnam's Sons Books for Young Readers, 2015

CJ and his grandmother travel across town on a city bus every Sunday to help out at a soup kitchen. On this particular Sunday, CJ is not excited about their venture and pesters his grandmother during the ride with questions such as “Why don’t we have a car?” or “Why do we always have to make this trip every Sunday?” His patient grandmother answers each question with her own wisdom and shows CJ the simple beauty and blessings all around him. As they get off the bus, CJ continues questioning and asks why the neighborhood is always so dirty. His grandmother points to the sky and says to him, “Sometimes when you’re surrounded by dirt, CJ, you’re a better witness for what’s beautiful.”

Children will identify with all of CJ’s “how come” questions because they have wondered the same things. These questions may be inappropriate when asked in public, but CJ’s grandmother has a wonderful way of answering, offering her grandson another viewpoint while not embarrassing bystanders in the process.

At one point during their ride, a blind man boards the bus with a Seeing Eye dog and CJ asks his grandmother why the man can’t see. “Some people watch the world with their ears,” Nana says. The blind man talks to CJ and tells

him about “seeing” with his nose as well and how people feel the magic of music best when their eyes are closed.

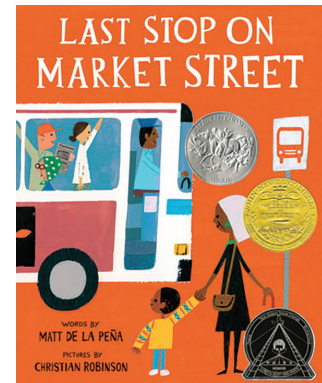
Matt de la Peña’s words, such as rain, drips, patter, umbrellas, and wet trees, create images that suggest rhythmic ostinati and melodic interludes. The old bus creaks and sags; the wipers have their own rhythm. This book could be paired with songs familiar to children such as *Rain, Rain, Go Away* or *The Wheels on the Bus*, depending upon their ages.

CJ is intrigued by the various people riding the bus. When a guitarist begins to strum and sing, CJ closes his eyes and dances to images he sees in his imagination. “He saw sunset colors swirling over crashing waves. Saw a family of hawks slicing through the sky. Saw the old woman’s butterflies dancing free in the light of the moon.”

Younger children might be more successful moving to some instrumental music of your choosing to illustrate CJ’s visions, but as they mature or become more accustomed to improvised movement activities, their comfort level with creating movement to the poetry of the words will increase. Older children may improvise rhythmic and melodic patterns to accompany the movement.

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Winner of the 2016 Newbery Award, *Last Stop on Market Street* describes a boy’s ride across town on a city bus, but it could inspire a musical exploration of various forms of transportation or a student-created story of a different trip and the people they meet along the way. Christian Robinson’s colorful, collage-like illustrations evoke the art of Romare Beardon, easily providing the catalyst for a cross-curricular lesson with the art specialist. Language arts



teachers will find ideas for story-starters and creative writing in this thought-provoking picture book. *Last Stop on Market Street* can be used in the music classroom and in other curricular areas in multiple ways. Like CJ, your students can learn to see beauty where they never thought to look. ■

**JULIE FROUDE** brings 28 years of living in Japan to her work as a kindergarten through Grade 6 music and percussion ensemble instructor in Hamilton, Ohio. She is fully certified in Kodály and Orff, as well as pre-K through Grade 12 Japanese. Ms. Froude is a Level I Orff recorder instructor as well as a part-time instructor of Japanese at the college level. She has presented music workshops at state and regional conferences and at the AOSA Professional Development Conference in Atlantic City, New Jersey. Her passion is to introduce and engage students in authentic multicultural music experiences.

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## Celebrating 50 years of Orff Schulwerk in the United States...

*The Orff Echo* editorial board invites you to be part of *Orff Schulwerk in America: Our 50th Anniversary Issue*. This keepsake, Spring 2018 issue honors the foresight of a group of 10 music educators in Muncie, Indiana who established the American Orff-Schulwerk Association and the accomplishments they inspired in the 50 years that followed. Reflecting on the past while remaining vigilant toward the future, the editorial board seeks submissions illuminating your philosophical and practical application of Orff Schulwerk. What draws us to the Schulwerk? How has it evolved? Where do we go from here?

If you are interested in participating in this enduring and significant contribution to our shared celebration, contact Richard Lawton ([richard@richardlawtonmusic.com](mailto:richard@richardlawtonmusic.com)) or Nicola F. Mason ([Nicola.Mason@eku.edu](mailto:Nicola.Mason@eku.edu)) with submissions, proposals, and questions. Please don't delay—submission deadline for *Orff Schulwerk in America: Our 50th Anniversary Issue* is August 15, 2017.

