

MOSES GOES TO A CONCERT

By Isaac Millman

Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1998. \$16.

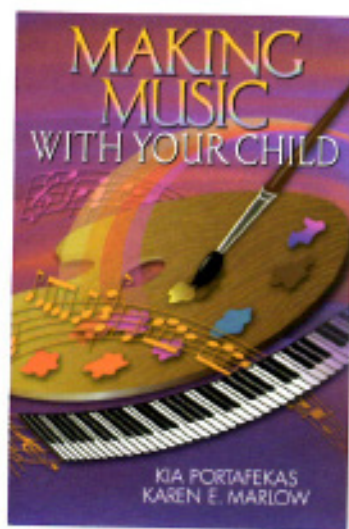
Upon first glance, *Moses Goes to A Concert* may seem like another picture book about the instruments of the orchestra or the concert-going experience, but a closer look reveals something more. This is a story about Moses, a young boy who has a dog, a toy-filled room and a new drum. He enjoys playing his drum, although he can't hear the sound it makes. Moses is deaf; he relies on feeling the vibrations of the drum through his hands and feet. He and his classmates, who are also deaf, are going on a fieldtrip to attend a young people's concert. Readers soon realize that this concert experience may be a little different from the usual.

The children find their seats in the concert hall and eagerly await the performance. They notice a variety of percussion instruments assembled in front of the orchestra, and their teacher, Mr. Samuels, describes some of them. When the female percussionist walks on stage to bow, Moses and his classmates applaud by waving their hands - as traditionally done in the deaf culture. This is only one example of the careful research the author has undertaken to authentically and respectfully represent the deaf community.

Before the music begins, Mr. Samuels hands his students balloons, which they hold to feel the vibrations produced by the musical instruments. Young readers will be intrigued by the ways in which deaf children can enjoy music. This may even spark a discussion about sound waves and the mechanics of the inner ear. Following the concert, the percussionist, who is also deaf, discusses her career and the obstacles she has overcome to reach her goals. Inspired by her story, Moses realizes that he too can do anything he sets his mind to. He excitedly goes home to share his experiences with his parents. Moses decides he will be a percussionist when he grows up.

Isaac Millman, author and illustrator of *Moses Goes To A Concert*, has written an inspirational story that teaches and entertains. He tells the story through traditional text, watercolor illustrations, and American Sign Language (ASL). The ASL illustrations, which include hand signs, body movements and facial expressions, are accurately depicted, enticing the reader to try them. The cartoon-like illustrations will capture children's attention without distracting from the story. Readers learn how those with hearing disabilities are able to communicate and participate in many activities enjoyed by others. And most importantly, children discover that through hard work and dedication they too can do anything they set their minds to - with or without a disability.

-Carlos Abril



MAKING MUSIC WITH YOUR CHILD

By Kia Portafekas and Karen E. Marlow

MMB Music, Inc., 2001. \$12.95.

This little volume focuses on Ms. Portafekas's creative approach to teaching piano to students of all ages, with Ms. Marlow's collaboration in the writing process. Any music teacher, whether in a private studio or at any level of elementary, secondary or college teaching, is likely to be enlightened and challenged by the ideas in this book. The author's emphasis on helping the child express himself aligns very closely with the childlike discovery and improvisation so important in Orff Schulwerk.

How many of us were taught piano or an instrument from a method book, page by page by page? In elementary school, how many of us sat and sang songs from a book? How many hours did we spend in college ensembles performing the works of the classical masters? When were *our* musical ideas solicited, notated and shared with others? The answer is: never or hardly at all. By the time we became adult musicians, our creative sap had hardened inside petrified wood. Our discovery of Orff Schulwerk as teachers let the sap flow again, and books like this one can give us some special insights on opening and keeping the creative process flowing for our students.

In the author's studio, students practice technique in imaginative ways and work on two or three pieces each

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