

# CHILDREN'S BOOK REVIEW

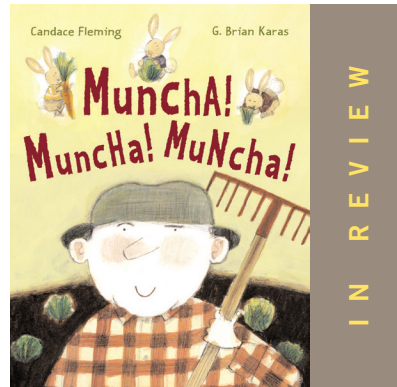
Reviewed by by Carol J. McDowell

## Muncha! Muncha! Muncha!

Written by Candace Fleming

Illustrated by G. Brian Karas

Atheneum Books for Young Readers, 2012



**B**unny Rabbit, Jack Rabbit, Roger Rabbit, Bugs Bunny, Peter Rabbit and his sisters Flopsy, Mopsy, and Cotton-tail—most people have read about some of these fluffy tails. In *Muncha! Muncha! Muncha!* author Candace Fleming, with onomatopoeia and entertaining word play, relays another hare-raising adventure.

When Mr. McGreely decides to plant a garden, he has no idea he will be competing with three hungry cottontails for his lettuce, carrots, peas, and tomatoes. His wire fence, wooden wall, and deep water trench fail to keep them away. In desperation, he resorts to constructing a tall brick wall, which finally keeps his crops safe and free from gnawing by the “twitch-whiskers.” When the time comes at last to gather his harvest, Mr. McGreely sets his basket down, leans his ladder against the wall, and climbs into the garden, basket in hand, happy and proud he has finally outsmarted those long-eared whiskery fellows. The sneaky rabbits, though, are watching his every move and, in G. Brian Karas’ clever gouache illustration, readers will spot three pairs of bunny ears sticking out of the basket. When Mr. McGreely discovers the trio of mischievous cottontails hiding under his vegetables, the story ends with everyone enjoying the harvest together—muncha, muncha, muncha.

This tale makes a wonderful sound story. As an introductory activity, you might read (or better yet, sing) the story *Inch by Inch, Row by Row – The Garden Song* by David Mallet, ISBN #0-06-443481-8. Then follow with *Muncha! Muncha! Muncha!* using the following instruments for sound effects whenever you read specific words or phrases such as:

- Mr. McGreely = cowbell
- Lettuce, carrots, peas, tomatoes = veggie shakers
- Sundown = slide whistle
- Moon up = crickets, frog rasps
- Tippy-tippy-tippy, pat = triangle
- Muncha, muncha, muncha = castanets
- Built = wood block
- Spring-hurdle, Dash! Dash! Dash! = vibraslap
- Dig-scrabble, Scratch! Scratch! Scratch! = guiro or wash board
- Dive-paddle, Splash! Splash! Splash! = ocean drum
- Sawed = flexitone
- Drilled = ratchet
- Tippy-tippy-tippy, stop! = triangle and a slapstick for “stop!”

Each time the bunnies outsmart Mr. McGreely and invade his garden, invite the children to sing *Oh, John the Rabbit* (available at Kodály.hnu.edu, the Kodály Center American Folk Song collection website sponsored by Holy Names University). Children can play the “Oh, Yes” parts on E and B resonator bells, or play an alternating E and B on a xylophone. Alternatively, invite

them to sing the words “Three bunny rabbits” in place of “Oh, John the Rabbit.”

For a closing activity, look for “Peter Rabbit,” published in the April/May 2007 issue of *Activate* magazine. Loretta Mitchell’s article offers a wonderful solo-singing activity using pictures of various vegetables for children to echo-sing as they practice their solfège by changing the words “Peter Rabbit” to “the three bunnies,” and “what a tummy ache they had,” and “here is what they ate.”

*Muncha! Muncha! Muncha!* offers a variety of musical activities to stir your students’ imaginations. This book will make a timely,

bountiful resource to add to your music classroom springtime collection. ■

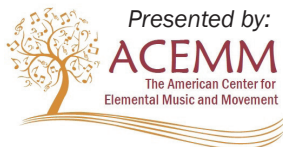
**CAROL J. McDOWELL** teaches elementary music for the City of St. Charles (Missouri) School District. She holds bachelor’s degrees in music and music education from Southeast Missouri State University, a master’s degree in music education, and a PhD from Florida State University. Carol was appointed to the editorial boards of *The Orff Echo* (2008–2016) and *The Missouri Journal of Research in Music Education* (2000–2024). She has completed three levels of Orff Schulwerk Teacher Education and Kodály teaching methods and has presented workshops and research poster sessions for national and state conventions. Her research articles have been published in various music education journals.

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