

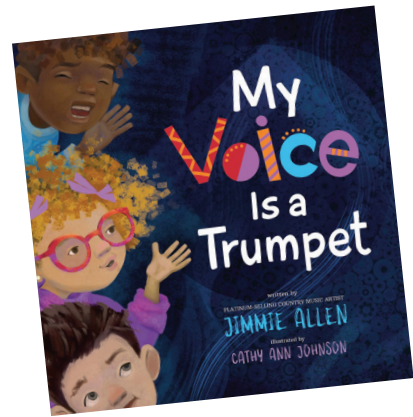
Reviewed by **Matthew Stensrud**

My Voice Is a Trumpet

Written by Jimmie Allen

Illustrated by Cathy Ann Johnson

Flamingo Books, 2021



become *ostinati*. At my Quaker school, some of our testimonies, or guideposts, include environmental stewardship, justice, community, peace, and kindness. Maybe a specific cause has come up for your students in their classroom or community.

The two speech pieces that follow are composition ideas for students to consider. The first is my example of how I use my voice to stand up and out, and the second is inspired by phrases students shared in class. If writing individually about three things that matter to them, students implore us to “listen to *my* song.” Other classes might jump at the opportunity to discuss in small groups and make a collective decision on three values, telling their classmates to “listen to *our* song.” Next steps could include body percussion, layered *ostinati*, a small group tableaux, or more.

1. Fighting for equality and justice.
Take care of our world.
Speaking up for others.
Listen to my song.
2. Be kind to everyone.
Lifting others up.
Sharing a community.
Listen to our song.

Allowing students space to share their values gives us a window into not just their learning, but their soul. We might know who can accurately sing a pentatonic melody, who can improvise rhythmic building bricks on the hand drum, or who are the most artistically sensitive movers when we mirror and shadow. But how well do we

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My voice will be loud when I'm not sure I know. Take a moment and reflect on this encouragement. All too frequently, children's voices are stymied both inside and outside of school. How often do we ask students to raise their hand if they “know?” Instead, what if we asked students to speak up when they are not so sure?

This empowerment of student voice is the central theme of country singer and songwriter Jimmie Allen's story, *My Voice Is a Trumpet*. Whether our voice is “tall as a tree” or “small as a bee,” we each have the potential to become trumpets—to speak up for others, to wonder and to ask, and to stand up for our world.

With magically woven illustrations depicting students of all races working together among a rainbow of colors, illustrator Cathy Ann Johnson encourages the reader to stand up to bullying and save our world through student-held signs. On another page, bright circles flow out of a trumpet just like a voice, encircling others as we are inspired to say no to hate and always choose love.

Although these social justice ideals are slowly becoming more common in the children's book world, our story ends with a less-encountered question: *How will you use your voice?*

What would your students blare from the mountaintops? Perhaps students consider their school motto when sharing phrases that naturally

really know our students if we do not know what they think of themselves and the world? The soul of the Schulwerk empowers our students to find their voice. Allen's story, *My Voice Is a Trumpet*, offers a beautiful opportunity to peek into both our students' souls as well as our own. So, how will you use your voice? ■

MATTHEW STENSRUD is in his 13th year teaching elementary music and movement in Washington, D.C. He is an AOSA Levels Courses movement teacher educator and clinician. Matthew served on *The Orff Echo* Editorial Board and contributed to the book *Responsive Classroom for Music, Art, PE, and Other Special Areas*. He is currently a Region V representative on AOSA's National Board of Trustees.

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