

New Worlds of Sound

The Kids Can Press Jumbo Book of Music. Deborah Dunleavy. Illus. Louise Phillips. Kids Can, 2001. 208 pp. \$16.95. ISBN 1-55074-723-1.

Celebrated composers such as Pauline Oliveros, John Cage, and R. Murray Schafer have long insisted that music is everywhere around us, that the world soundscape itself needs to be understood as an exemplary kind of musical composition. It is often the case that children are, in fact, most receptive to such teachings, perhaps because they have fewer institutionalized preconceptions about what counts as legitimate music-making. *The Kids Can Press Jumbo Book of Music* by award-winning author and children's entertainer Deborah Dunleavy encourages children and adults alike to enliven their understanding of the possibilities of sound by actively engaging in the kind of musical experimentation at the heart of Oliveros's, Cage's, and Schafer's philosophies of music-making. "Anything that you can hit, scrape, rattle, shake, blow, buzz, pluck or strum," writes Dunleavy, "can be turned into a musical instrument. Even the kitchen sink!" Assuring readers that they will be able to produce a full range of musical sounds from objects that are readily at hand — things lying around the house, things in the recycling bin — the book offers a genuine celebration of creativity and improvisation.

So, if you relish the thought of a children's book that encourages both experimentation in music-making and reverence for the soundscapes of everyday life — a book with instructions for assembling do-it-yourself didgeridoos and popsicle-stick kalimbas — then this joyous and innovative text will strike a resonant chord. And if you're open to the idea that music (from honking horns to the wind rustling through leaves) is, indeed, all around us, then *The Kids Can Press Jumbo Book of Music* will prove to be hugely instructive. Included in the book are descriptions of a wide-range of instruments and musical styles, instructions on how to create your own instruments from scratch, as well as Dunleavy's accompanying CD, *Strike Up The Band!*, which features some of the home-made instruments from the text. Dunleavy provides some familiar starting points (tunes such as "The Ants Go Marching In" and "Yankee Doodle") for performance, as well as some not so familiar compositions (a Ghanaian hand-clapping piece called "Sorida," a Creole song called "Mister Banjo") to encourage an expansion of musical repertoires. Or, perhaps, children and adults would rather make their own music. This delightful book gives readers license to do whatever they want with music. It encourages us to have open ears: "If it sounds good, you're making music." What more encouragement do we need?

Illustrator Louise Phillips's cartoon drawings accentuate the playfulness of the book, while calling attention to a very important concept: a book about various types of music should be illustrated with an equal variety of people. The multicultural assortment of children adorning the pages and the diversity of representation (there is, for instance, a girl in a wheelchair) encourage us to recognize that music is for — and is to be made by — everyone.

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