Let's Start the Music: Programming for Primary Grades.

Brown, a seasoned children's programmer, believes in the benefits of exposure to music: “Musical experiences can be memory making and magical, and that’s why I love sharing music with children” (xi). Her enthusiasm and creative approach are immediately evident. After a few brief introductory chapters on the importance of exposing children to music and some ideas on how to accomplish this, Brown jumps right into storyline.

The author's belief in the importance of music is steeped in the theory of multiple intelligences, but unfortunately, she merely skims the theory's surface in the introductory chapters and does not return to the subject. Early literacy is mentioned as well, as music can play an integral role in developing early literacy skills, but Every Child Ready to Read is mentioned and explained only in passing, and Brown “name drops” phonological awareness but does not offer the reader much explanation.

If the reader is a children's programmer trained in early literacy, this treatment may be sufficient. However, others will need to do further research to understand these concepts. Despite this, however, the book will be useful for most readers.

Brown provides outlines for several music-rich programs for primary grades. Each has a different theme, such as “Game Time” or “Camp Do Re Mi.” The music takes top billing and makes these programs really stand out. Each plan begins with an introduction to the theme, a “playlist” citing each song, book, and activity or craft presented. Annotations are provided for each book and CD, which is quite helpful for programmers and also useful for collection development.

Each program is complemented with a thematic activity. For example, at “Camp Do Re Mi,” children sing the classic camp song, “B-I-N-G-O,” which morphs into “L-I-M-B-O” and is followed by the limbo game. In addition, each outline includes the creation of an instrument, like a shoe box guitar or castanets. (Haven’t you always wondered how to make a kazoo—and use it in programming?)

Brown includes “Bonus Books” for each theme, including nonfiction titles appropriate for extending discussion and learning, as well as “Bonus Tracks,” which provide a plethora of alternate music choices for flexibility in planning.

Overall, this title is a great choice for programmers looking for fresh ideas. These activities will help expose children to music and its benefits as well as increase everyone’s enjoyment of library programming.—Sarah J. Hart, Manager, Public Services, Chatham-Kent Public Library, Chatham, Ontario, Canada

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