

100 YEARS Booklist

1 No.5
/04

ARTS

Flight on the



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AUDIO FOR YOUTH

Featured Reviews

Colibrí. By Ann Cameron. Read by Jacqueline Kim. 2004. 9hr. unabridged. Listening Library, CS, \$25 (1-4000-8536-5). 800-541-5525

Gr. 5-8. Cameron's novel is a beautifully told, wrenching story about a 12-year-old Mayan girl's struggle to escape her kidnapper and reunite with her beloved family. With subtle, distinct vocal inflections, actress Kim moves easily between the voices of young Rosa, her rough kidnapper, and the remaining cast of disparate characters—rogues, spiritual healers, and more—creating vibrant character portraits from the narrative, which includes occasional Spanish and Mayan words. Kim's understated narration celebrates the lyrical prose and extends the story's suspense, bringing the lush Guatemala setting to listeners' ears. A fine performance of a 2003 *Booklist* Editors' Choice selection. —Gillian Engberg

Merry Fishes to All. 2004. 35min. Trout Records, CD, \$14.98. 888-439-8342

K-Gr. 6. What would Christmas be without fish? Luckily, there's no need to speculate. Trout Fishing in America (Ezra Idlet and Keith Grimwood) provide fishy holiday cheer in this collection of 12—mostly original—songs that deal with traditional holiday staples: snow, food, and presents. Idlet and Grimwood's trademark antic humor shines through in this mixed bag. There are always gift disasters, as lamented in "Santa Brought Me Clothes," while a gift even worse than fruitcake is revealed in "I Got a Cheese Log." The holiday isn't all disappointment, of course. "Snow Day" tells of the quiet joys of snow, and "Snow Is Falling" introduces identical snowflake twins Bob and Bob. Santa will

★ **Mike Mulligan and His Steam Shovel.** 2004. 52min. Simon & Simon, CD, \$17.99 (1-932684-00-X). 202-419-0490.



K-Gr. 5. Composer, conductor, and arranger Stephen Simon takes a beloved children's tale and enhances it with a musical score in this innovative CD that introduces children to Virginia Lee Burton's classic story. Performed by the London Philharmonic Orchestra, the original background music underscores Yada's reading of the familiar tale. Brief author information follows the story recitation. Then maestro Simon talks about the music, explaining techniques and discussing specific instruments, such as the haunting Irish pipes and French horns. He tells children to listen for musical references so they can identify various instruments before the story is repeated one more time. The final track features the "Mike Mulligan Song" performed by a jazz combo. An excellent melding of children's literature and beautiful music, this welcome addition to audio collections is a fun and innovative way to introduce music and a classic tale to youngsters. —Iraa Hatfield

be pleased to deliver this CD. Highly recommended. —Paul Shackman

Starring Prima! The Mouse of the Ballet Jolie. By Jacquelyn Mitchard. Read by the author. 2004. 3hr. unabridged. Harper, CS, \$18 (0-06-059763-1); CD, \$22 (0-06-074742-0). 800-242-7737

Gr. 3-5. Talented dancer Prima is bound for greatness, but the little mouse chooses a strange path to fame when she befriends Kristen and her kitten, Meowsky. Mitchard is both a skilled writer and narrator. Her light and lively reading style suits the colorful story and emphasizes the fantastic elements of the characters. Mitchard alters her tones to reflect different characters, adding depth and dimension to the text. Her perfectly timed performance allows the subtle humor to shine through, although some of the clever wordplay may be lost on young listeners. The recording begins and ends with lively music, reflecting the book's whimsical tone. —Anna Rick

The Train They Call the City of New Orleans. Read by Tom Chapin. 2004. 10min. Live Oak, CS and hardcover, \$25.95

(1-59112-900-1); CD and hardcover, \$28.95 (1-59112-904-4). 800-788-1121

K-Gr. 4. Tom Chapin's voice perfectly reflects the earthy essence of the familiar Steve Goodman song. It almost feels as if Chapin is hauling on a brake when he reads the lyrics, but then he unleashes his guitar and explodes into song. The 2003 book, illustrated by Michael McCurdy, gets a nostalgic treatment. His lushly tinted scratchboard illustrations are truly spectacular. Their tilted, slowly rotating perspectives suit the sinuous journey of the train from Chicago to New Orleans. The details are period perfect, from scenes of men playing cards to outdoor views of "Ernie's Used Cars and Parts." A map marks stops along the way. With beautifully executed sound effects, this highly entertaining package can be used in classrooms to introduce geography or train travel. —Kristi Elle Jemtgaard

★ **Caribbean Playground.** 2004. 41min. Putumayo, CD, \$14.98 (1-5875-9133-2). 888-788-8629.



Gr. 3-8. The Caribbean islands are marked by a terrific diversity of musical influences. This collection of Caribbean songs includes performers from Jamaica (Desmond Dekker), Haiti (Marlene Dorcena), Martinique (Kali), Guadeloupe (Luc Leandry), and Puerto Rico (José González), among others. Although reggae and calypso may be the best-known ingredients of the spicy Caribbean mélange, other musical styles, such as zouk from the French Caribbean islands and soca from Trinidad, are represented as well. Get ready to sway and sing along with such favorites as "Great Big Boat," "Jamaica Farewell," "Coconut Woman," and "Reggae Dancin'." Informative liner notes offer nice

summaries of the contents and contexts of each song and artist. Although it is impossible to fully convey the breadth of Caribbean music in 12 selections, this CD offers a lively, engaging introduction to the region's music. Along with such earlier titles as *Caribbean Playground* [BKL Ap 15 03], this is highly recommended for both adult and young listeners. —Paul Shackman

What Charlie Heard. By Mordcai Gerstein. Read by the author. 2004. 21min. Live Oak, CS and hardcover, \$25.95 (1-59112-278-3); CD and hardcover, \$28.95 (1-59112-486-7). 800-788-1121.

Gr. 1-3. Crashing thunder, church bells, and the clip-clop of horses introduce this picture book that visits the world of composer Charles Ives (1874-1954). Excerpts from two of Ives' symphonies and one piano sonata blend with traditional songs as a backdrop to Gerstein's straightforward narration, which is both warm and respectful. The book's jittery illustrations convey the same sense of dissonance as the soundtrack. Teachers and anyone with a particular interest in music will welcome this series of vignettes that offer glimpses—both auditory and visual—of the composer's life, from birth to death. This new entry in the American Music series pays homage to an innovative musician, who continued to write in the face of ridicule and rejection. —Kristi Elle Jemtgaard

