

Reviewed by Margie Tytenicz

Listen to Our World

Written by Bill Martin Jr. & Michael Sampson
 Illustrated by Melissa Sweet
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 Simon and Schuster, 2016

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Listen to *Our World* is a beautiful and cleverly compiled book of animals, their young, and the habitats in which they live. The illustrations by Melissa Sweet, a Caldecott honor artist, include pencil and watercolor sound words for each animal that seem to be a part of the habitat. Sweet's animal illustrations evoke a sense of movement against the muted, dreamy background accented with bright colors that pop from each page.

The book begins with a view through the windows and into the homes of diverse families, as parents wake their children. "Good morning, little one. Can you hear the sounds of our world?" and "Listen! Listen! Listen!"

Then readers enter a world of animals and their habitats that change at the turn of a page. Each new world includes a two-page illustration of its flora and fauna. Some spreads are horizontal, whereas others are vertical, making the visuals even more intriguing. A two-sentence statement provides the name of the animal, how it is moving, and which habitat is its world. The Gila monsters crawl, eagles soar, pandas chew, and penguins waddle. The story ventures into many habitats, such as the rainforest, desert, wilderness, jungle, marshland, and the South Pole. At the end of the book, readers find themselves back at a human home where they once again look through the window as a mother tucks her child into bed with good-night kisses and says, "Sweet dreams, my little ones. All is well in our world."

The final three pages of *Listen to Our World* are devoted to facts about each animal and the habitats. Some favorites will surely be the lion



that roams the plains near Kenya, the whale that swims in every ocean of the world, and the kangaroo that hops through the Outback of Australia. The final fact is about children who live all over the world.

There are many possibilities for the Orff Schulwerk teacher to use *Listen to Our World* with primary children in the music classroom. Invite children to move like the animals on each page while imitating their sounds. Create a sound carpet using unpitched percussion instruments to show the colors, the habitats, the sounds of the animals, or even to match the movements. Students will enjoy working in small cooperative groups to create poems, rhythm ostinati, or songs and dances to go with the theme of each page. Encourage them to find the habitats in different places around the world using a globe or world map. Another option is to use this book as the basis for a music program, featuring song and dance from different countries and habitats.

Listen to Our World will bring your students to places they may never see and engage them in a variety of ways. It will challenge their creativity and motivate them to learn more about animals, their habitats, and this wonderful planet. *Listen to Our World* invites children to become advocates for animals and preserving their habitats and, ideally, will inspire them to travel and see the world in which we live. ■

MARGIE TYTENICZ lives and teaches kindergarten through Grade 2 in Choctaw, Oklahoma, and is currently in her 35th year of teaching. Margie has successfully completed three levels of Orff Schulwerk Teacher Education. She has held all offices in the Central Oklahoma Orff Chapter and has presented numerous times for the chapter. She taught a class for The University of Oklahoma and was a national board certified teacher from 2004-2014.