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### Ah, Music

Irene Halliday

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Aliki. *Ah, Music*. Illustrated by Aliki. Harper Collins, 2003. ISBN 0060287276. \$17.89. 48 pp.

Reviewer: Irene Halliday

Reading Level: All;

Rating: Excellent;

Genre: Contemporary realistic fiction

Subject: Music--History and criticism--Juvenile fiction; Book--Review;

"Music not only unites people, it connects our own selves with our feelings," says Aliki, author and illustrator of *Ah, Music*, a many-layered compendium for children about what has often been described as the "universal language." Each page presents a kaleidoscope of action and color surrounding explanatory material presented in many forms: as conventional text, captions for illustrations, conversation bubbles, diagrams, lists and humorous asides by various small animals. Though full of information, the light-hearted, interested and interesting tone promotes informal learning and awakens Aliki's obvious enthusiasm for her subject in the reader. She discusses the basic components that make music what it is (sound, rhythm, melody, pitch and tone, volume, feeling) in a simple, child-friendly manner, referring to tunes, activities and life experiences universally familiar to children.

Though her focus is on the Western music tradition as she moves through creating (composing), performing, dance, and music history from prehistoric time to the present, Aliki doesn't forget to include a two-page spread featuring the diversity of world music, filled with eye-catching illustrations.

Fittingly, the joy of making music and performing is the final topic treated. "Making music is hard fun," says Aliki, who then proceeds to show children the satisfaction that comes from practicing and performing themselves. Music "is for anyone who wants to hear the sound, dance to the rhythm, clap to the beat, sing along, or be still to imagine." And Aliki's *Ah, Music* is to be enjoyed by children and adults at home, in the classroom or at the library.