



M A Y Belle Sherman First Graders Record Music CD!

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📁 Around Town 🧑 Written by Mary Grainger

2015



What do Cornell's 150th birthday, a Yiddish folk song and sunflowers have in common?

This year Randi Beckmann's first grade class at Belle Sherman Elementary School is recording a CD full of songs from students' home communities. Students and their families have taught the Sunflower Room children traditional favorites from their diverse cultures. Songs such as a

South African lullaby "Thula Thula" a Dutch piece "Hanje Panje", and even "Far Above Cayuga Waters", Cornell's alma mater will appear on the CD.

Classroom teacher Beckmann remarked, "These young students not only learned songs from their classmates and experienced a real recording studio, they determined they needed a book of lyrics to accompany the CD! This lyric book is often read by children often read during free choice periods, and has served as a literacy tool. Struggling readers enjoy finding known words and reading fluency through repetitive readings has improved."

These songs were rehearsed and will be recorded with the help of local artists: John Simon (guitar), John Hoffmann (banjo) Robert Isaacs (Director of Choral Programs, Cornell University), and John Hilton (Hiltronex Studios). Funding for this project was generously provided by the Fine Arts Booster Group (FABG), an affiliate of the Ithaca Public Education Initiative (IPEI). Principal Dan Breiman thanks FABG and IPEI for "sponsoring community collaborations that support innovation in our school.

CD artwork was made in art class with Ithaca City School District (ICSD) teacher Kate Praisner and volunteer photographer Addy Davidoff. Marie Burns created the cover.

The Sunflower classroom and its community believe that our cultures can be amplified through song. All participants in the project will be present at our CD release party, (Sunflower Classroom, Belle Sherman Annex) where adults and students will speak about the transformational power of music in the classroom.

May 20th 9 AM WVBR studios, students will be professionally recorded by John Hilton from Hiltronex Sound Production Studios .

On June 9th CD a Release Party will be held at the Belle Sherman School (Main Building) Cafeteria at 12:45 PM.

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