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Clarion Review ★★★★☆ PICTURE BOOKS

I Celebrate My Voice

Nonku Kunene Adumetey
Mary K. Biswas, Illustrator
Nonku's Corner Publishing (Feb 15, 2022)
Hardcover $17.99 (53pp)
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I Celebrate My Voice *is a bright picture book that encourages the recognition, appreciation, and enjoyment of a wide world filled with unique voices.*

Nonku Kunene Adumetey's thoughtful picture book *I Celebrate My Voice* champions the value and worth of every human being.

This edifying text begins by covering how communication works through spoken and sign language. Then, it explores its own concept of a voice: a person's sense of self—their ability to speak the truth about what they want, and what they want others to know about them—is their voice. Thus, a voice is much more than the mere sounds one makes when talking, singing, or cheering.

This inner sense of mattering, having a purpose, and being able to make a difference is elaborated on throughout as the book encourages getting to know and love oneself. It also encourages recognition of the fact that being different is an opportunity to add to the world. Examples of different types of self-expression are depicted, including reading, playing, singing, dancing, and telling stories.

The book's illustrations are exuberant and colorful. They depict children of different ages, cultures, physical abilities, and ethnicities doing activities that bring them joy. They also imply that, while a child's interests will change over time, everyone should be free to explore various avenues of self-expression. In one example, a girl twirls like a ballerina; when she's older, she's seen writing a story, playing the piano, and becoming a teacher. The closing illustration, however, muddles the details of its reflected image.

With the notion that each interest that one explores contributes to a rich, full life, the book delights in imagining the many possible futures that await those who believe in themselves. It also rejoices in diversity and affirms the power that each person has to spread kindness. The introduction of fun activities bring the book to a satisfying close.

I Celebrate My Voice is a bright picture book that encourages the recognition, appreciation, and enjoyment of a wide world filled with unique voices.

KRISTINE MORRIS (February 17, 2022)

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