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E-news

February 2009

February is always a good month for celebrations. There's Valentine's Day, Black History Month, and spring is in sight (on March 20). There are a few more things that we'd like to celebrate:

Congratulations

We're so pleased that ALA is honoring two of our biographical stories about creative people. We want to thank the authors and our talented narrators and production staff.

2009 AMERICAN LIBRARY ASSOCIATION NOTABLE RECORDING

Celia Cruz: Queen of Salsa

by Veronica Chambers, illustrated by Julie Maren, read by Michelle Manzo
This soulful biography of the salsa superstar begins with her childhood in Havana through her success in her own country, and on to her heartbreaking emigration from Cuba and into worldwide stardom.



2009 AMERICAN LIBRARY ASSOCIATION NOTABLE VIDEO RECORDING

Mack Made Movies

by Don Brown, read by George Guidall

The man behind the famous slapstick movies featuring the Keystone Kops, Fatty Arbuckle, and Charlie Chaplin is featured in this fascinating picture book biography.



Black History Month

Celebrate with our many books on Black history and culture. A full list is available at our web site at www.liveoakmedia.com. Here are a few examples.

When Marian Sang

[Live Oak Music Maker]
 written by Pam Munoz Ryan, illustrated by Brian Selznick, read by Gail Nelson
 "This production takes an excellent book and makes it stunning." - *AudioFile*



Uptown

[Picture Book Readalongs]
 written and illustrated by Bryan Collier, read by Ricky Smith
 "A stunning and affectionate celebration of Harlem." - *School Library Journal*

Wiley and the Hairy Man

[Readalongs for Beginning Readers]
 written and illustrated by Molly Bang, read by Robin Miles
 "Background harmonic and steel guitar music add authenticity and a down-home feeling to the nicely paced tale." - *Booklist*



I Thought My Soul Would Rise and Fly

[Audiobook]
 by Joyce Henson, read by SiSi Johnson
 The Reconstruction Period offers a fascinating milieu for the reflections of a young girl as she determines what freedom



means to her.

Audio books FAQ

Occasionally we like to respond to frequently asked questions about audio book production. Since we often get asked about what it takes to be a narrator, we decided to invite one of our favorite duos, the husband-and-wife team of Jason Harris and Peter Pamela Rose to answer for us. They collaborated on two hilarious books by **Diane de Groat** and two more are due out later this month. ([More information here.](#))

Live Oak Media: How is audio book narrating different from your other acting work?

Jason Harris: For me, the beauty of audiobook narrating is that you can really create all aspects of the story, as opposed to playing just one character in a show or film and be in the hands of the director and editor. In audiobook narrating, you get to create the mood, the character's voices and intentions, and paint the entire picture in real time. I find there is real joy in the simple telling of a story.



Peter Pamela Rose: Since I am only doing voice work (as opposed to in front of the camera and on the stage) audio books are a longer form for me. Usually I am touting the virtues of some product in a 30 second spot.

LOM: What kind of preparation do you have to do?

PPR: Jason and I listened to the first two audio books we did (*Trick or Treat*, *Smell My Feet* and *Jingle Bells*, *Homework Smells*) to make sure that we matched the voices and then read the books out loud trying out different voices. We bounce ideas off of each other and most of the time make each other laugh.

JH: Preparation for me is essentially reading the entire book over and getting the mood and feel for it. Then choosing a style and voices for all the characters so I'm not searching for them in the studio. In longer audiobooks with a lot of narration I may mark some sections that could become tricky after hours of reading - putting brackets around certain phrasing, highlighting certain words and such.

LOM: What is the biggest challenge with narrating?

JH & PPR: Keeping your energy up and being consistent. This is more of a problem in longer books, but it can also be in picture books with a lot of characters, and when it's an ongoing series it could be tricky making sure the voices truly fit the picture as drawn and stay consistent.

LOM: How do you work with the producer/director?

PPR: With a lot of laughter. These characters are cute and Jason is naturally a VERY funny guy so he keeps everyone cracking up. It is a very free flowing relationship -- Arnie (Cardillo, producer) and Rory (Young, engineer) give us ideas and we give them ideas. Whichever works best is the one that you hear in the final production. It's a lot of fun recording with Live Oak.

JH: The fun thing about working with Arnie and Rory is they are very much a part of the process, chiming in over the speakers with comments and notes, often very funny ones. The whole experience then becomes more fun, lively, and full of laughs...oh and hopefully the work is good too!

LOM: How do you like reading with your spouse?

PPR: It's the best.

JH: I love reading with Peter. It makes the day seem even less like work than it normally does. It feels more like we're just doing a fun activity together...go to the zoo, the park...or the studio! We also like to crack each other up and be creative together so the time really just flies by.

LOM: How does it compare to reading alone?

JH: Reading alone is more of a zen-like experience, especially on long books. It feels like a form of meditation. Reading with Peter is more like being at a mini-party and telling a story to the guests - even if those guests are a little younger than we are.

PPR: It's not as much fun. I don't laugh as much.

LOM: You do so many voices - any favorites?

PPR: Patty is my favorite character and voice - she's such a know it all!

JH: I don't really have a favorite voice. I'm excited if the voice really seems to fit the character and exudes personality. When that happens it is much easier to stay consistent and keep the energy up because I really feel personally in sync with the character and his - OR her - feelings.

Would you like to know more about our narrators or audio book production? Please send us your questions at info@liveoakmedia.com.

We want to hear from you! Please write us at with your questions or comments at info@liveoakmedia.com or call us at (800) 788-1121.

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