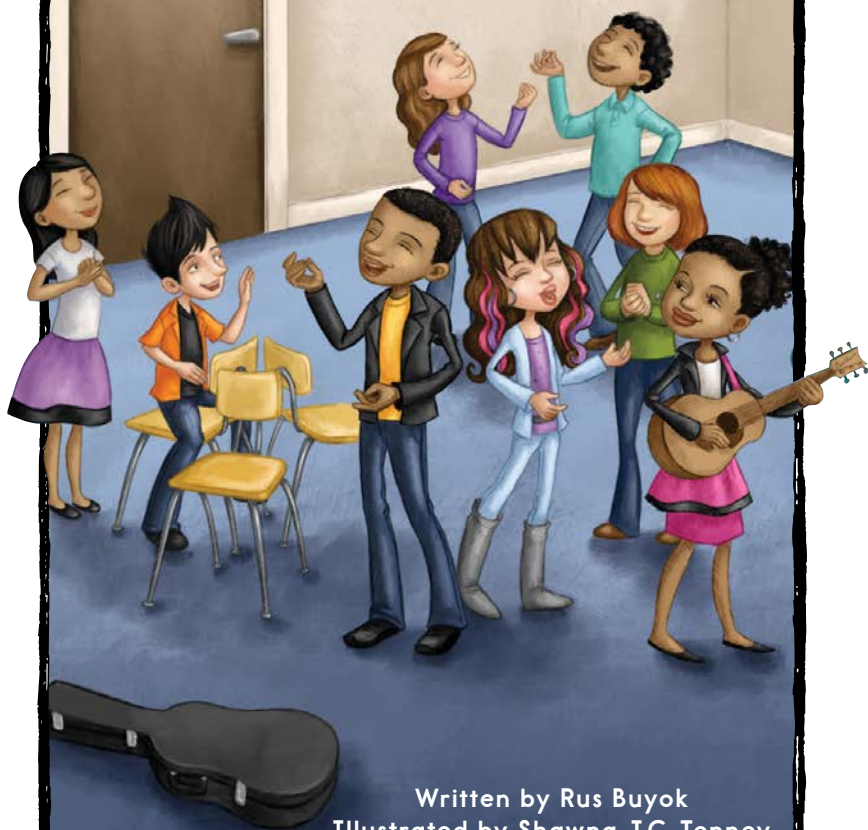


LEVELED BOOK • P

Rockin' Rhythm and Sweet Harmony



Written by Rus Buyok

Illustrated by Shawna J.C. Tenney

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“How can I **practice** with all that drumming?” **Harmony** complained to her mom. They were upstairs in the living room.

“The **competition** is only two days away. **Rhythm** needs to practice, too,” her mom said. “You’re doing great.”

Her mom played a **scale** on the piano and waited. Harmony began to rub her hands together. Her mouth opened, but only a small squeak came out. “I . . . I can’t!”

"You can," her mom said. "You have a wonderful voice. Try again." She played another scale.

"I can't think with all that thumping!" Harmony stormed off to the basement and right up to her brother.

"Stop it!" she screamed. Rhythm stopped playing his drums.

"What's your problem?" he asked.





“You’re making a racket to keep me from practicing,” Harmony snapped. “You’re scared I’ll win the competition and you’ll come in last place.”

Rhythm rolled his eyes. “Yep, that’s it. I’m scared of a girl who can’t sing in front of other people.”

“Well, it’s not like you’re going on TV,” Harmony said. “People will think a baby is banging on some pots and pans.”

“Stop it, you two,” Mom said. She was standing at the bottom of the stairs.

“Harmony, go to your room and practice. You can’t hear the drums up there. I’ll be up in a minute,” Mom said.

Harmony sighed and went back upstairs. Rhythm made a face, spun his drumsticks, and started to play. After a few beats, he stopped, took a deep breath, and started again. This time, he made it a few more beats before he stopped and shook his head.

“Everything okay?” Mom asked.

“I’m losing the **tempo** somehow,” Rhythm replied.

“Could it be **nerves**? Winning five hundred dollars and going on TV is a big deal,” Mom said.

“I don’t know.” Rhythm shrugged.

“I should keep practicing.”

“If it helps, you’re sounding really good.”

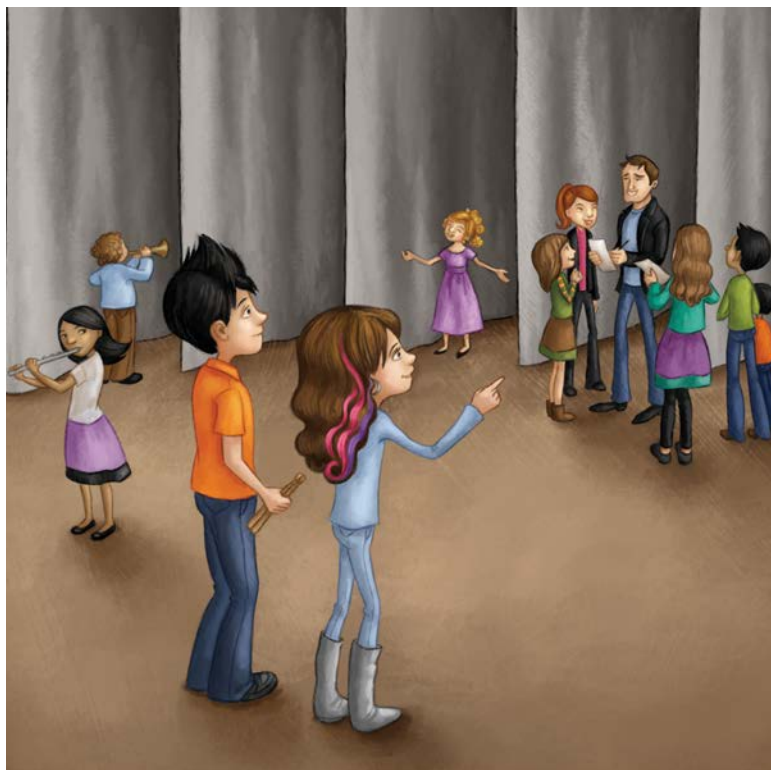
“Thanks, Mom,” Rhythm said.

They both continued to practice over the next two days, Rhythm downstairs and Harmony upstairs.

They still argued during meals. “How’s the drumming?” Harmony would ask. “I keep telling Mom to quit banging pots around so I can hear it.”

“What’s that? I can’t hear you over the squeaking,” Rhythm would reply. On it went until Mom told them to stop.





Finally, the day came for the Junior Music Competition. Many kids had shown up, and they were all warming up backstage.

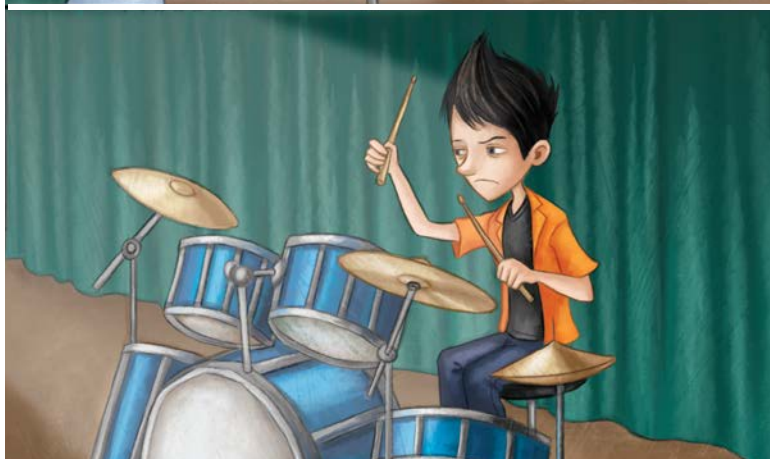
“Look, there’s Mr. Hackett!” Harmony pointed to a tall man all the kids were crowding around. He hosted the Kidz Hour morning show. “I can’t believe I could be on his show next week if I win.”



“You?” Rhythm snorted. “Maybe if they show you in the audience while I’m playing.”

“Don’t start,” Mom said. “You should both be warming up.”

Rhythm and Harmony had just enough time to prepare before a man with a clipboard called their names.



Rhythm was first. He stopped and started three times before he finally finished his **routine**. Harmony was next. She sang her entire song, but the judges barely heard her. The audience clapped politely, but they both knew they hadn't done well.



Both were feeling pretty low as they watched the other performers from the waiting room. They watched as a brother-and-sister team took the stage. She played guitar, and he sang.

“They’re pretty good!” Rhythm whispered to his sister.

“Totally. I’m a little jealous,” Harmony whispered back.

When the pair finished, they came into the room and sat down near Rhythm, Harmony, and their mom.

Everything was quiet except for the TVs. Rhythm started tapping on the chair next to him. The boy started nodding his head to the beat, and then he started humming a song. Harmony recognized it and started harmonizing while humming along. Before they knew it, they were both singing loudly. The boy's sister pulled out her guitar, and Rhythm was slapping his hands on three chairs.

When the song ended, everyone in the waiting room cheered.

"I never thought I'd see you two playing together," Mom said.





“We did sound pretty good,” Rhythm admitted. Harmony nodded in agreement.

“Good? We sounded amazing!” the boy said. “I’m Mel, and this is my sister Tempo.”

“Our parents are big music buffs,” Tempo said before whispering, “Mel is short for **Melody**.”

“Don’t tell people that!” Mel said. Rhythm and Harmony introduced themselves, and they all had a good laugh about their names.

“We should jam again sometime. We’d make a great band,” Tempo suggested.

The man with the clipboard came in and said the judges were announcing the winner. Everyone crowded around the televisions.

Mr. Hackett was on stage. He opened an envelope and read: “The winner is . . . Springfield Country Band!” The audience exploded into cheers.





Rhythm, Harmony, Mel, and Tempo were smiling, even though they hadn't won.

"You guys want to come over sometime?" Rhythm asked.

"Our basement would be a really great place for all of us to practice together," Harmony said.

Hearing this, Mom couldn't help but smile.

Glossary

competition (<i>n.</i>)	a rivalry between businesses, teams, or individuals for something desired (p. 3)
harmony (<i>n.</i>)	a combination of musical notes played or sung together in a pleasing way (p. 3)
melody (<i>n.</i>)	a series of musical notes that forms the main tune of a piece of music (p. 13)
nerves (<i>n.</i>)	feelings of unease, anxiety, or nervousness (p. 6)
practice (<i>v.</i>)	to do something over and over again, often for the purpose of getting better at it (p. 3)
rhythm (<i>n.</i>)	a regular beat, or sound pattern, in music, poetry, or dance (p. 3)
routine (<i>n.</i>)	a series of actions, jokes, or other parts of a performance created for an audience (p. 10)
scale (<i>n.</i>)	a series of musical notes that goes up and down in tone in a regular pattern (p. 3)
tempo (<i>n.</i>)	the speed of a certain piece of music (p. 6)

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