

# School Library Journal

October 1, 2008

PreS-Gr 3—Well-known children's performing artist and Grammy-award winner Bill Harley puts on a live concert before an audience at the University of Montana, Missoula. Performing beautifully on six-string acoustic guitar, and with only a wooden chair as a prop, Harley has great comedic timing and the ability to create multiple voices. His performance showcases 10 songs and stories related to family life and school. In "Grown-ups Are Strange," he humorously informs children that they will also be grown-ups someday. Among the other folk-style songs and stories are "Mrs. Ammons and the Boys' Room," "The Ballad of Dirty Joe" (from Harley's picture book), "You're in Trouble," "Mom and the Radio," and more. The bonus features on the DVD include an interview with Harley and a section of FAQs. The CD set is a recording of the entire concert. A fun-filled romp with one of the finest children's performers, and a special treat for those who have never seen Harley in a live concert. —*Beverly Bixler*

## Booklist

November 1, 2008

What's more fun than a big box of Bill Harley? This two-CD set includes six songs and four stories, recorded "before a live audience at the University of Montana." The line between story and song is sometimes subtle. For example, "The Great Sled Race" is sort of a hybrid, a talking blues tale, and "The Ballad of Dirty Joe" seems more like a rhyming recitation than a musical ballad. In two longer tales, Harley zestfully details grade-school complexities. "The Teachers' Lounge" exposes that cloistered haven, while "Mrs. Ammons and the Boys' Room" tells of the precarious delights of the last week of school. The Grammy-winning artist has a keen eye for the absurdities of family dynamics—"Is Not Is Too" succinctly sums up sibling interaction. In "Grown-ups Are Strange," Harley views the obvious in a fresh, funny manner, striking a balance between sensitivity and goofiness. Some selections have been featured in earlier CDs.

—*Paul Shackman*



September 2008

Grammy-winning artist Bill Harley is at it again with Yes to Running! This singer/songwriter/storyteller who is also a regular commentator for NPR's All Things Considered, has a great ability to make people laugh. And not just little people. The grown-ups will get as much out of this CD as the children. It's a wonderful CD to pull the family together during drive time! Teachers will also find that it can add some humor and excitement to the classroom, and Bill Harley's site even has suggestions on how teachers can incorporate the materials. A very enjoyable musical CD! —*Joy Kirkpatrick*