

THE PUBLISHER'S CONNECTION

M. Jerry Weiss, Editor

Focus on Portraits and Media

A Short Excursion

During the summer my wife and I had the opportunity to visit the National Portrait Gallery in London. A special exhibit, "Beatrix Potter to Harry Potter: Portraits of Children's Writers," attracted many adults and children of all ages. The exhibit, celebrating the achievements of children's authors, led to the production of a book that had all of the portraits and interesting comments about each other.

Anne Fine, of *Mrs. Doubtfire* fame, wrote the "Foreword" in which she stated:

The British have had so many fine writers for children. Explanations for this pre-eminence in the field range from the warping effects of our miserable and mercurial climate to the unenviable way in which so many of our offspring are raised. Clearly, part of the excellence in some kinds of writing for the young springs from the national quirk called the British sense of humor. But I suspect a good deal stems from the rebellion against that other characteristic for which we're supposedly noted – our hypocrisy. . . (p. 7)

In addition to Beatrix Potter, J. K. Rowling, and Anne Fine, were portraits of such literary luminaries as J. M. Barrie (*Peter Pan*), Kenneth Grahame (*The Wind in the Willows*), Frances Hodgson Burnett (*The Secret Garden*), A. A. Milne (*Winnie the Pooh*), J. R. R. Tolkien (*The Hobbit*), C. S. Lewis (*Chronicles of Narnia*), Mary Norton (*The Borrowers*), Philippa Pearce (*Tom's Midnight Garden*), Roald Dahl (*Boy*), Richard Adams (*Watership Down*), Nina Bawden (*Carrie's War*), Michael Morpurgo (*The War of Jenkins' Ear*), Philip Pullman (*The Northern Lights*, *The Subtle Knife*, *The Amber Spyglass*), Jamila Gavin (*Coram Boy*), and many, many more. By each portrait were some interesting quotes from the author's book or comments made by someone else on the author's work. A fabulous literary happening.

A schedule of author visits and readings in this gallery was also available. All of this was free of charge. In the Museum Gift Shop were lots of children's books and books for young adults. Business was booming.

Wouldn't it be great to have a traveling portrait exhibit of American Children's and Young Adult Authors? Maybe we could then have an exchange exhibit with the British exhibit.

Audio World

I'm getting hooked on books on tape and CDs. Make no mistake, I then want to read the books, if I haven't already done so.

Bruce Coville has launched a terrific audio library. Each recording is done as a dramatic reading with lots of people

playing the various characters in the book. He and a full cast are featured in *Song of the Wanderer*.

Tamora Pierce and a full cast are featured in her book, *Circle of Magic: Sandry's Book*. (The entire series of *Circle of Fire* will be available shortly).

Paula Danziger and a full cast are featured in *United Tates of America*. Paula has more to say at the end of the story that is quite compelling.

Important to note: All of these recordings are unabridged. They bring back the golden age of radio. These are perfect for developing listening skills and perhaps for extending students' powers of concentration.

These resources are available from Full Cast Audio, P. O. Box 6110, Syracuse, NY 13217, or <http://www.fullcastudio.com>. Toll free calls can be made to 800-871-6152.

New from Random House Listening Library is a full cast recording of *Seek* by Paul Fleischman. The novel, available from Cricket Books, is written in play form, and this is an exceptionally good reading.

Yes, I was hooked on mysteries as an adolescent, and I fondly remember the Hardy Boys. The Tony Award winning actor Bill Irwin does justice in reading Franklin Dixon's *Hardy Boys: The Tower of Treasure*.

One of the most favorably reviewed books in recent years was *Troy* by Adele Geras. The recording features the dramatic voice of Miriam Margolyes, who was honored with the Order of the British Empire for her extensive film, television, and theater career in Great Britain. This is the thrilling retelling of the siege of Troy as seen through the eyes of today's events in the Middle East.

Notes From *Publisher's Weekly*

In the July 22, 2002 issue of *Publisher's Weekly*, is an interesting article, "Hollywood Happenings." (pp. 79-83) Here is a feature on how fast Hollywood producers are buying children's and young adult books for screen treatment.

Stephen Moore, a literary agent who specializes in film and television rights, says there are three things that "put a project over the top."

First is a very recognizable or beloved title or author like Dr. Seuss or *Tuck Everlasting* (by Natalie Babbitt). . . Second, projects that have a very strong concept, like (William Steig's) *Shrek!*, which is a simple, fable-like story. . . and finally, . . . a proposed book-to-film project that has a meaningful attachment – a big director, a big actor, or sometimes even a big screenwriter is likely to be developed and produced sooner than most.

Here are just a few titles that are listed as projects in the works or that are under option at this time:

Alex Rider series by Anthony Horowitz, optioned by Samuelson Productions.

America by E. R. Frank, film rights purchased by Rosie O'Donnell.

Aquamarine by Alice Hoffman, optioned by Fox 2000.

Artemis Fowl by Eoin Colfer, rights sold to Miramax.

A Band of Angels by Deborah Hopkinson, optioned by City Entertainment.

Because of Winn-Dixie by Kate DeCamillo, optioned by Joan Singleton.

Belle Prater's Boy by Ruth White, optioned by Angel Brown Productions.

Burger Wuss by M. T. Anderson, optioned by New Line Cinema.

Confessions of a Teen Drama Queen by Dyan Sheldon, optioned by New Line Cinema.

Everything on a Waffle by Polly Horvath, optioned by Radical Media.

The Firework-Maker's Daughter by Philip Pullman, optioned by Miramax.

The Giver by Lois Lowry, optioned by Walden Media.

The Goats by Brock Cole, optioned by Humble-Journey Films.

His Dark Materials trilogy by Philip Pullman, optioned by New Line Cinema.

Holes by Louis Sachar, currently shooting as a feature film by Walden Media.

In a Dark Wood by Michael Cadnum, sold to Beacon Films.

In the Company of Men: A Woman at the Citadel by Nancy Mace, sold to Artisan Entertainment of USA Network.

The Incredible Painting by Clousseau by Jon Agee, optioned by Cielo Cerezo.

Interstellar Pig by William Sleator, optioned by Nickelodeon Films/Paramount Pictures.

My Guy by Sarah Weeks, optioned by Disney Feature Films.

The Night Room by E. M. Golman, being developed as a feature film by Paramount Pictures/Jane Startz Productions/Icon Productions.

The Pushcart War by Jean Merrill in development by Jane Startz Productions.

Rowan Hood: Outlaw Girl of Sherwood Forest by Nancy Springer, in development for Jane Startz Productions.

The Secret of Platform 13 by Eva Ibbotson, sold to Nelvana for development as a feature film.

A Series of Unfortunate Events by Lemony Snicket, sold to Nickelodeon Films/Paramount Pictures, first three books adapted by author for feature film, due 2003.

The Sisterhood of the Traveling Pants by Ann Brashares, sold to Warner Bros.

Someone Like You and *That Summer* by Sarah Dessen, inspired New Line Cinema film tentatively titled *How to Deal*, due out 2003.

Son of the Mob by Gordon Korman, in development for Jane Startz Productions/Miramax.

A Wrinkle in Time by Madeleine L'Engle, filmed as television miniseries for Miramax TV, to be aired on ABC.

And this is just a partial list of all the films listed in the article. There is much to be said about how a film/tv presentation can lead to an increase in the sale of a book.

Good luck to many authors out there.

While on the subject of film, every school media center should have *Cinema Year by Year: 1894-2002*, a DK (Dorling Kindersley) book. David Thomson, noted film critic and author of several books, including *Hollywood A Celebration*, has written the "Foreword" in which he states the purpose of this book is to "open up a recent but fascinating history." There are reprints of pictures from the silent film days all the way up to the Oscars received by Denzel Washington for best actor in *Malcolm X* and Halle Berry for her role in *Monster's Ball*. Reviews are from magazines and papers throughout the entire world. Throughout there are excellent essays on topics such as "The Silent Era," "Movies Find a Voice," "The Studio System," "The New Wave," and "War and After," to name just a few. Poster Art is used throughout, as well as photos from many different films. Information about some of the world's movies stars is also included. This is an encyclopedia that can help many students appreciate how films are made and how dictate to the styles and tastes of moviegoers. And the list price is fifty dollars (\$50) for the almost 1,000 pages of most fascinating reading. For information contact <http://www.dk.com>.

I, for one, don't understand how the history and development of film (and the Broadway musical) can hardly ever be mentioned in any English or social studies course. These are major developments in modern culture and reflect achievements by individuals in unique ways, often represented by the presentation of major awards throughout the world.

Congratulations

To Karen Hesse, author of *Witness* and *Out of the Dust*, who is a recipient of a 2002 McArthur Fellowship.

To Graham Salisbury, author of *Lord of the Deep*, (Delacorte) winner of the Boston-Globe Horn Book Award for fiction.

To Elizabeth Partridge, author of *This Land was Made for You and me: The Life and Songs of Woodie Guthrie*, (Viking) winner of the Boston Globe-Horn Book Award for nonfiction.

To Terry Borzamoto, recipient of the 2002 ALAN Hipple Service Award.

To Paul Zindel, recipient of the 2002 ALAN Award.