

# CD Reviews

By Martha Gallagher

**Castle Dance**—Book and CD  
Jory Aronson and Sharon Thormahlen  
CastleDanceKids.com

**H**arpist and composer Sharon Thormahlen has joined with author, composer, and musician Jory Aronson in a wonderful collaborative project. *Castle Dance* is a book and CD combination geared for young children—and children of all ages!

The simple, yet charming story gently and effectively illustrates lessons about getting along, solving differences, and sharing. The story is filled with music. One can read the book to children and play the songs on the CD, where indicated, or a child can listen to Sharon read the story and follow along in the book, enjoying the illustrations, turning the pages when they hear the harp gliss, and dancing along with all the wonderful music.

The original music is delightful; appealing and uncomplicated, the music is very singable, hummable and danceable. The first tune we hear is a jaunty “Mice Parade.” “Singing Trees” had me humming along right away, and then making up lyrics to the sweet, catchy tune. “Witty Wizards,” with the accompanying illustration, will have both children and adults giggling and dancing in silly fashion. “Castle Cats” tangoes the way one might well imagine sassy cats would. You cannot resist dancing and clapping along with “The Merry March!”

Wonderful versions of traditional tunes “Planxty Hewlett” and “Sailor’s Hornpipe” sit perfectly among the original pieces, in their places in the story. The music selections are part of the story, but each piece would work quite marvelously outside the story, in an ambiance or performance setting.

The music is performed by a number of talented musicians, including Sharon and Dave Thormahlen, Jory Aronson, Kriss Crowley, Kathy Burselson and Paul Bezanson. Instrumentation includes harp, mandolin, guitar, banjo, viola, violin, keyboards, bass, percussion, and vocals in delightful combinations. Dave Thormahlen built many of the fine instruments played by the group.

This enchanting book and CD will appeal to everyone. As the story draws to a close it says, “The Castle Dance had been a magical way to work out their differences, to welcome the new baby into their hearts, and to remember how much fun it was to dance together.” Ah, the magic of music—what a magnificent thing to share.



To have your new CD reviewed, please contact Martha Gallagher at [martha@adkharper.com](mailto:martha@adkharper.com) for mailing instructions.