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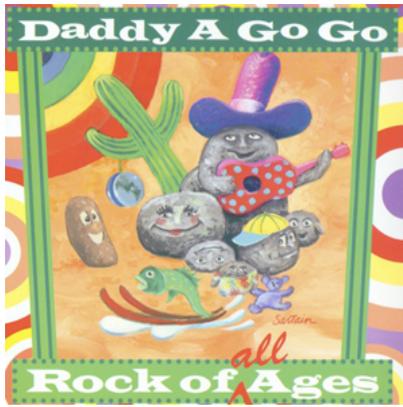
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SINGALONG BOUNCE: John Boydston references '60s pop with entertaining lyrics and good-for-you messages

FAMILY FILE

Children's music enters the next generation

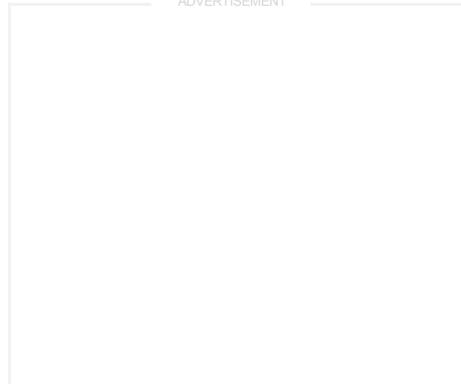
Kicky tunes and clever lyrics engage kids and their favorite adults in making music and learning about the world around them.

By Lynne Heffley, Los Angeles Times Staff Writer
April 30, 2008

Gunnar Madsen, co-founder of the inventive a cappella group "The Bobs," enriches the field of children's music in a style uniquely his own.

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FOR THE RECORD:

Children's CDs: Website addresses for two children's CDs reviewed in Wednesday's Calendar section were incorrect. Information for Gunnar Madsen's "I'm Growing" is at www.GunnarMadsen.com. Information for Debi Derryberry's "Very Derryberry" is at www.debiderryberry.com. —

His new album, "I'm Growing" (Gee, Spot! Records, \$15. (800) 448-6369, www.GunnarMadsen.com), is his best to date, with off-the-wall lyrics -- "I love that lady with the pumpkin hair / She smells as sweet as butter" -- and expert, wildly varied vocal and instrumental textures.

Tender cowboy dreams ("Best in the West"), a tribute to librarians and a hilarious take on Mozart's 40th Symphony give way to a tender finish: a lullaby with Harry Nilsson-like lilting harmonies and a soulful rendition of the traditional "Shenandoah."

Other new music releases aimed at the younger set:

"Pop Fly": Childhood observed with wit and empathy and one of the most mellow rock 'n' roll voices around: These are singer-songwriter Justin Roberts' trademarks, and they shine in his new CD, "Pop Fly" (Carpet Square Records; \$15, www.justinrobertsmusic.com).

Roberts weaves deft lyrics through layers of beautiful sound. In the title track, a reluctant outfielder plays baseball under "cotton candy clouds." Other songs are about making memories at Grandma's ("From Scratch"), "Big Field Trip" thrills and living life to the fullest in "Fruit Jar":

"Sometimes you've just got to spin that old propeller / And watch it rise up way past the moon. . . ."

"The Magic Eye": Imagine riding on a dinosaur, climbing the tallest mountain, being safe inside a circle of light -- or growing up to be an animal doctor or an artist. Grammy Award-winning songwriter Bunny Hull encourages children to use their "magic eye" to see worlds of opportunity and dreams in this installment of her "Young Masters" book-and-CD sets, "The Magic Eye," from Dream a World (\$13.95; www.dreamaworld.com).

Hull's heartfelt songs and text are complemented by Kye Fleming's delicate computer-generated illustrations, narrator Elayn J. Taylor and flutist Diane Hsu.

"Very Derryberry": With gentle humor, Debi Derryberry (the voice of TV's "Jimmy Neutron") takes a sunny, youthful pop and jazz approach to original and traditional story songs in her second children's CD, *Very Derryberry* (VeryDerryBerryProductions, \$14; www.debiderryberry.com).

She revisits familiar nursery rhymes, counts ice cream scoops, explores opposites and feelings, relates the adventures of two remarkably freckled brothers and escorts listeners to a peaceful "Slumberland."

"Dragonfly Races": Internationally known folk singer-songwriter Ellis Paul makes a welcome foray into children's music with his first family album, "Dragonfly Races" (Black Wolf Records, \$15; www.ellispaul.com).

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