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## Heliotrope Books Launches HelioTot Imprint with *A Song for the Birds*, the First Title in the How Do You Do Music™ Series for Children

*Sisters Leah Wells and Naomi Rosenblatt Team Up to Write, Illustrate, and Publish Unique Music Story Books for Early Readers*

[NEW YORK] Heliotrope Books has just announced its new imprint for children, **HelioTot**. The August publication of HelioTot's *A Song for the Birds* by Leah Wells, illustrated by Naomi Rosenblatt, also heralds the launch of the **How Do You Do Music™** series, designed to introduce pre-schoolers and beginning readers to music through stories and pictures.

*A Song for the Birds* portrays notes on the treble clef as the unique vocalizations of individual birds who sing their own notes (C for the Canary, D for the Duck, and so on)—but then, under the direction of “The Birdwatcher,” the various birds join together to create a whole song, using all of their notes, not just one. Whimsical illustrations bring the birds and their music delightfully alive.

The How Do You Do Music™ books will provide an engaging tool for parents, caregivers, and teachers to connect music, words, and pictures for their beginning and pre- readers. “When I presented *A Song for the Birds* at the New York Public Library’s Story Time, I was thrilled to hear the whole room sing the notes back to me, so I know how much fun a parent can have reading these to their own children and having them sing along, too,” said Leah Wells.

Leah's sister Naomi Rosenblatt, the book's illustrator and publisher, said, “While there are many good illustrated songbooks for children, the How Do You Do Music™ books are the first we know of to include musical notation as part of a story.” Future titles in the How Do You Do Music™ series are scheduled to be released every 2-4 months and will focus on a variety of musical concepts, including the treble and bass clefs, the different kinds of notes, key signatures, and scale building:

- *How the Rainbow Remembered the Music* continues to reinforce the placements of notes on the staff with the addition of the bass clef and accidentals.
- In *The Sad Piano* a lonely boy in a new house changes his melancholy tune as he meets new playmates and band members.
- *The Major and Minor Ghosts*: When Dad fixes the broken boards on the haunted stairway, the major ghost takes charge of the minor ghost’s domain.
- *Furry Footnotes* takes a child tracking wild animals by the rhythm of markings left in the snow. This book teaches different valued notes: whole, half, quarter, eighth and sixteenth.
- *Crumbs on Drums* explores key signatures with a silly who-done-it.

- *When Melody Goes to the Doctor* is a prescription for laughs with musical puns and jokes; open wide and say “A.”
- *Allegro, Andante, Adagio ... Conductor Don’s Baton* teaches the markings of scored orchestral music as Conductor Don leaves his rehearsal and stops to conduct everything on his way home, from traffic horns to alley cats and finally his own children practicing their instruments.

The How Do You Do Music™ books came about because musician-educator Leah Wells, who has taught music to children for more than 15 years, had been using “storybooks” she created herself to help students understand their lessons and give their practicing a little flavor. The booklets were such a hit with her students and their parents that Leah approached her sister, Naomi Rosenblatt, president of New York’s Heliotrope Books, to help get them published. As it turned out, Naomi was not only the right publisher for the books, she was also the right illustrator for them, too. “My sister has always been a talented graphic artist,” says Leah, “and when I saw her drawings of the singing birds for the first book, I knew we were going to make a great team!”

Naomi points out that the How Do You Do Music™ books are not the sisters’ first collaboration: “We initially worked together when I was six and Leah was three. We ‘self-published’ (with the help of our mother!) *The Buffalo Bill Songbook*.” Leah wrote the songs and Naomi illustrated. “Not much has changed,” Leah adds.

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**Author Leah Wells**, a veteran children’s music educator and performing musician (vocals, guitar, piano, mandolin, and more), developed her “Song Note Stories” while teaching music to pre-schoolers and school-age early readers, including a number of classes with Head Start. She is also the co-author of *Games That Sing: 25 Activities to Keep Children on Their Toes* (2011, Heritage Music Press). She is now at work on a memoir of her experiences teaching music at Head Start.



**Illustrator Naomi Rosenblatt**, Leah’s sister, is a publisher, whose Heliotrope Books specializes in unique projects with a creative flair. Naomi is also an accomplished artist whose clients in publishing include Scholastic, Sesame Workshop, Random House, and Simon & Schuster. She is the author of *Rainforests for Beginners*, and the illustrator of numerous other books in the *For Beginners* documentary comics series.

#### BOOK INFO:

### **A SONG FOR THE BIRDS**

By Leah Wells. Illustrated by Naomi Rosenblatt.

A HelioTots Book. Volume 1 in the How Do You Do Music™ Series

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