

MUSICAL PICTURE BOOK

LISTEN ONLINE – QR CODE INCLUDED



Glory Days in New Orleans!

WE'RE A POSSUM FAMILY BAND

Story and songs Bïa, Erik West-Millette and Olaf Gundel

Illustrations Fanny Berthiaume Performers Alexa Devine,
Olaf Gundel and Annick Brémault

2



the secret
mountain

Glory Days in New Orleans!

WE'RE A POSSUM FAMILY BAND

Story and songs Bia, Erik West-Millette and Olaf Gundel
Illustrations Fanny Berthiaume Performers Alexa Devine,
Olaf Gundel and Annick Brémault

2



Mama Poss! Papa Poss! Tell us
what it was like when you were
growing up!



Yeah! In your time,
were there Roman emperors?
And gladiators?

Wake up, gerbil face.
It's pretty obvious that
they've never been to
Rome.

You're one to talk!
You're the gerbil face.
Just look in the mirror!



And what do you know, anyhow?

It's true that we've never been to Rome. But we've travelled everywhere in America.

Oh yeah, we were always on the road. Our band was rocking. Mama Poss playing the harmonica and me on the dobro. We were one hot duo, I'd say.

Did you ever meet any movie stars?

Oh yeah, kiddo. I remember meeting up with the famous trumpet player, Louis Catstrong. We actually saved his life when he was being attacked by...

But wait, wait a minute! You can't just start telling the story from there.

Come on, tell us a story!

Tell us a story, please, please, please!



It all started when a letter arrived
one fine morning. A hummingbird flew
to our window and dropped it off.

The letter was from Joe Snake, a famous music manager.
He wanted to be our agent and book our band.
“You’re blessed with talent...” That’s how the letter began.



Dear Mr. and Mrs. Possum

June 26

You're blessed with talent...

The whole state of Louisiana is talking about your amazing duo. Mr. and Mrs. Possum, let me introduce you to the world. You're on your way to glory, trust me. Don't sweat the details, just sign here! Have faith in Joe Snake and you'll be stars before you know it. The crowds are going to go wild, just pack your bags and you'll see. You can start with a performance in an amazing venue in the French Quarter, in the heart of New Orleans.

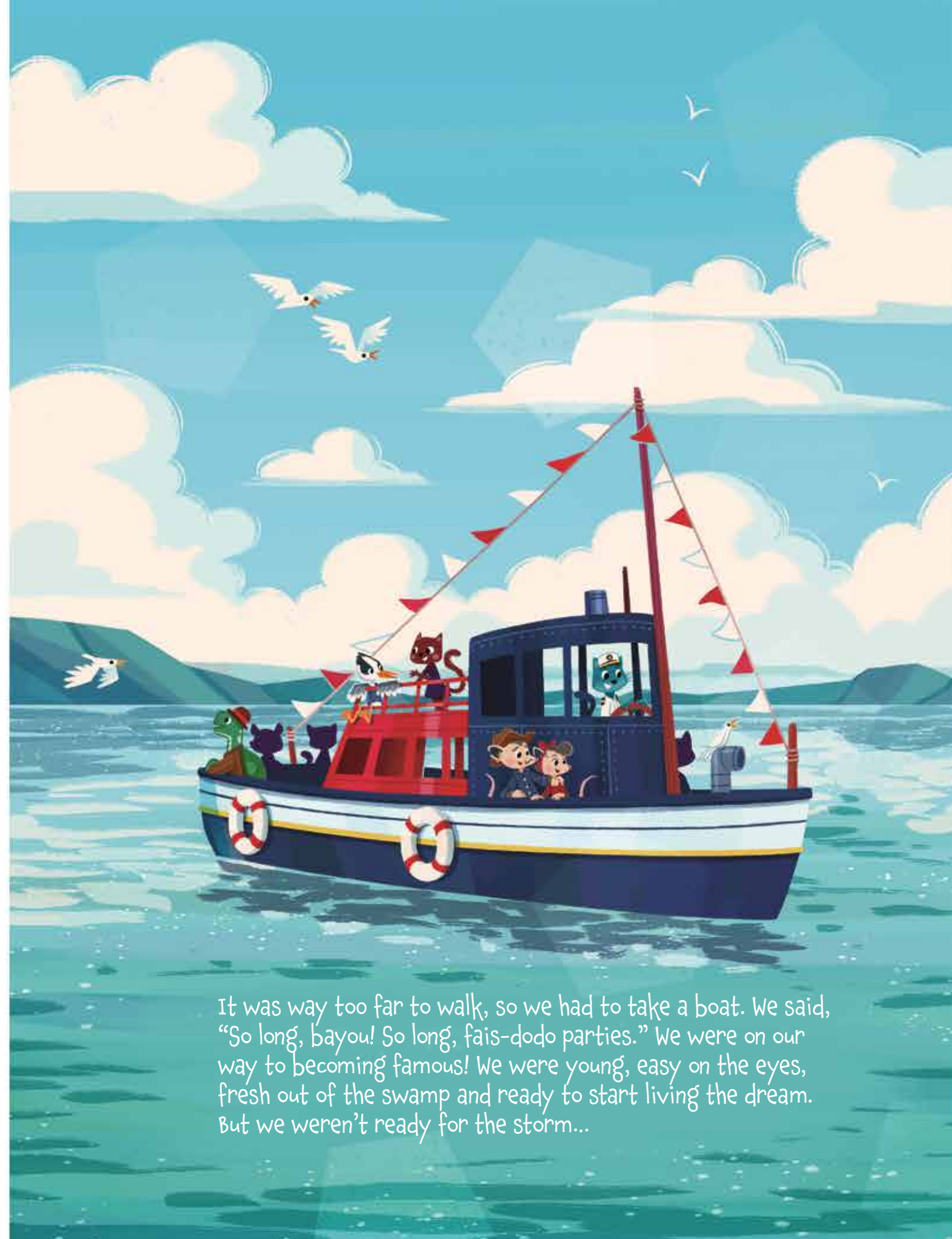
Joe Snake

Mr. Possum


Mrs. Possum

Joe Snake

Oh my god! I have to tell you, my dear grandchildren,
we were pretty excited! New Orleans, here we come!
I put all my harmonicas in my little front pouch and
Papa Poss grabbed a backpack and his dobro case.



It was way too far to walk, so we had to take a boat. We said,
“So long, bayou! So long, fais-dodo parties.” We were on our
way to becoming famous! We were young, easy on the eyes,
fresh out of the swamp and ready to start living the dream.
But we weren’t ready for the storm...




Storm? What storm?


What's this about a storm?



All day and all night, we travelled down the Mississippi River. Then, right in the middle of the trip, things got nasty! Out of nowhere, we saw a hurricane on the horizon and it was coming straight for our boat. Everybody got seasick and was just holding on as best as they could.



And then we heard a big splash and someone started yelling: cat overboard!



My dear young ones, I was so scared.
Would the river swallow him up?

Right in the middle of these huge crashing waves,
we see a paw flailing. Guided by courage, Papa Poss
fearlessly dove in.



And suddenly, an alligator appeared and was ready to pounce on...

Alligators don't pounce on things like that in the middle of a hurricane!

Sounds like you're making the story up as you tell it!



Quiet! Let her finish!



Well, for a minute, I was expecting the worst. Then, on the side of the boat, I saw a pair of feet near the grab rails. It was my love, my hero, my valiant possum who had just saved the cat and his instrument.



That's when he introduced himself to us.
"Enchanté! Louis Armstrong, that's my name."



"I dropped my trumpet and jumped in the water right away to fetch it. My trumpet's the love of my life, I'd do anything for it. But it looks like I would have died if it hadn't been for you."



Well, now that we've finally made it to port after all that panic, allow me to show you the best of my city. My home is your home. I'm a back-alley cat. But you know, all cats are grey in the dark and it's at night that this city looks its best.



You'll find lots of mice and garbage here at night. Jazz was born in the night. It all started in Storyville. You need to come down and meet my friends. This is my home. I tell you, I really am a back-alley cat.



We followed our new friend to his bar, the Spotted Cat. The guy played all night till his paws were black and blue. You could hear the trombone. You could hear the drums.

There was an alley cat playing the tuba and a long-haired Angora cat on bass.



And on piano, if you can believe it, a cat that waddled like a penguin.

All of a sudden, outside on the corner of Bourbon and Orleans, a marching band appeared playing a really catchy tune.



Behind the musicians, there was a wedding party with the bride all in white.

As they went by, she threw her bouquet into the crowd, and Mama Poss caught it with her little paws! An hour later, we got married right there in front of the Spotted Cat!





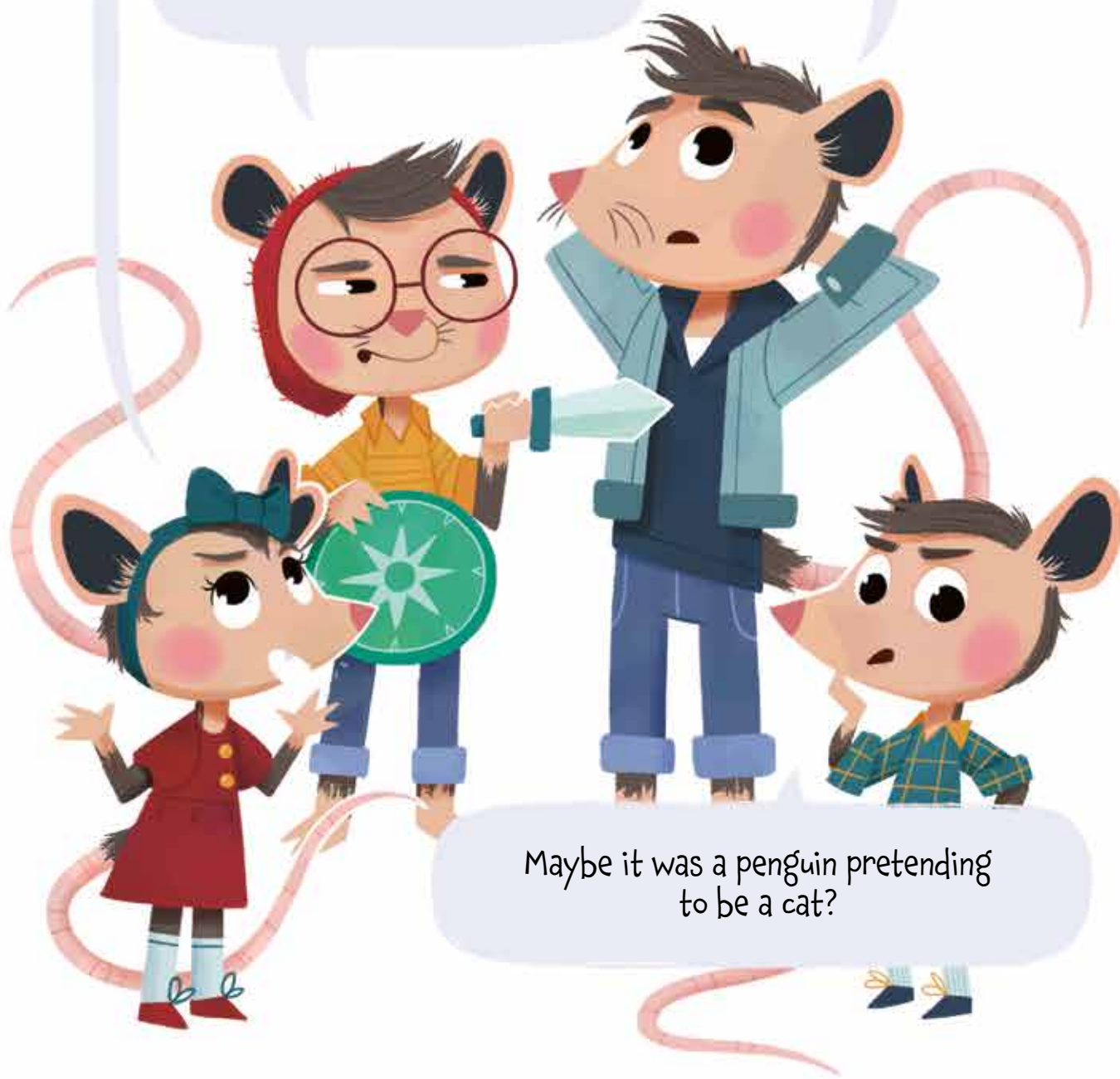
Really kids, it was the perfect wedding! We danced until the wee hours of the morning with our new feline friends. But before long, it was time to hit the road again.

So, we cut out of the party and got on a streetcar named Desire. We were due to meet up with Joe Snake and pursue our musical adventure. We had a hot gig to go to that would make us stars! Our story started in New Orleans, and now, we were well on our way to glory!

What? You were going back to Glory?

Well, I still can't figure out how a cat that waddles like a penguin can play piano.

Are there gladiators in Glory?



Maybe it was a penguin pretending to be a cat?

As if a penguin could live in the South. Get a brain and stop talking like a mongoose!

I'm not a mongoose! Mama Poss, he called me a mongoose!



When I'm big and tall enough to reach the ceiling, I'll know how to spell words like catnip, catfish, catchup...

Ok, should we sing our song now?



Possum Anthem

Lyrics Bia and Annick Brémault

Music Olaf Gundel, Erik West-Millette and Bia

Singer Annick Brémault

Possums are smart and bright
We love to come out at night
When we play dead
We stand out in a crowd
Fainting really makes us proud
It's so very awesome
Just to be a possum
We'll eat anything in sight
We love to come out at night
Possums are smart and bright



Alley Cat

Lyrics Bia and Annick Brémault

Music Olaf Gundel, Erik West-Millette and Bia

Singer Annick Brémault

No one to love
Nowhere to go
I'm a cat from the alley
I'm down and I'm low
Won't you open your door
Maybe just have a chat
I'm just a sweet old alley cat

Longing for love
Could it be you?

All I need is your smile
Cause I'm feeling so blue
Just a spot by the fire
A place of my own
Won't you please just take me home

I'll purr so loud
To drown out the storm
I'll get rid of mice
And keep your bed warm
Your days will be sunny
It's as simple as that
There's nothing like an alley cat
You know you won't regret it
It's as simple as that
There's nothing like an alley cat



Oh, When the Saints

Traditional, arrangements Olaf Gundel and Erik West-Millette

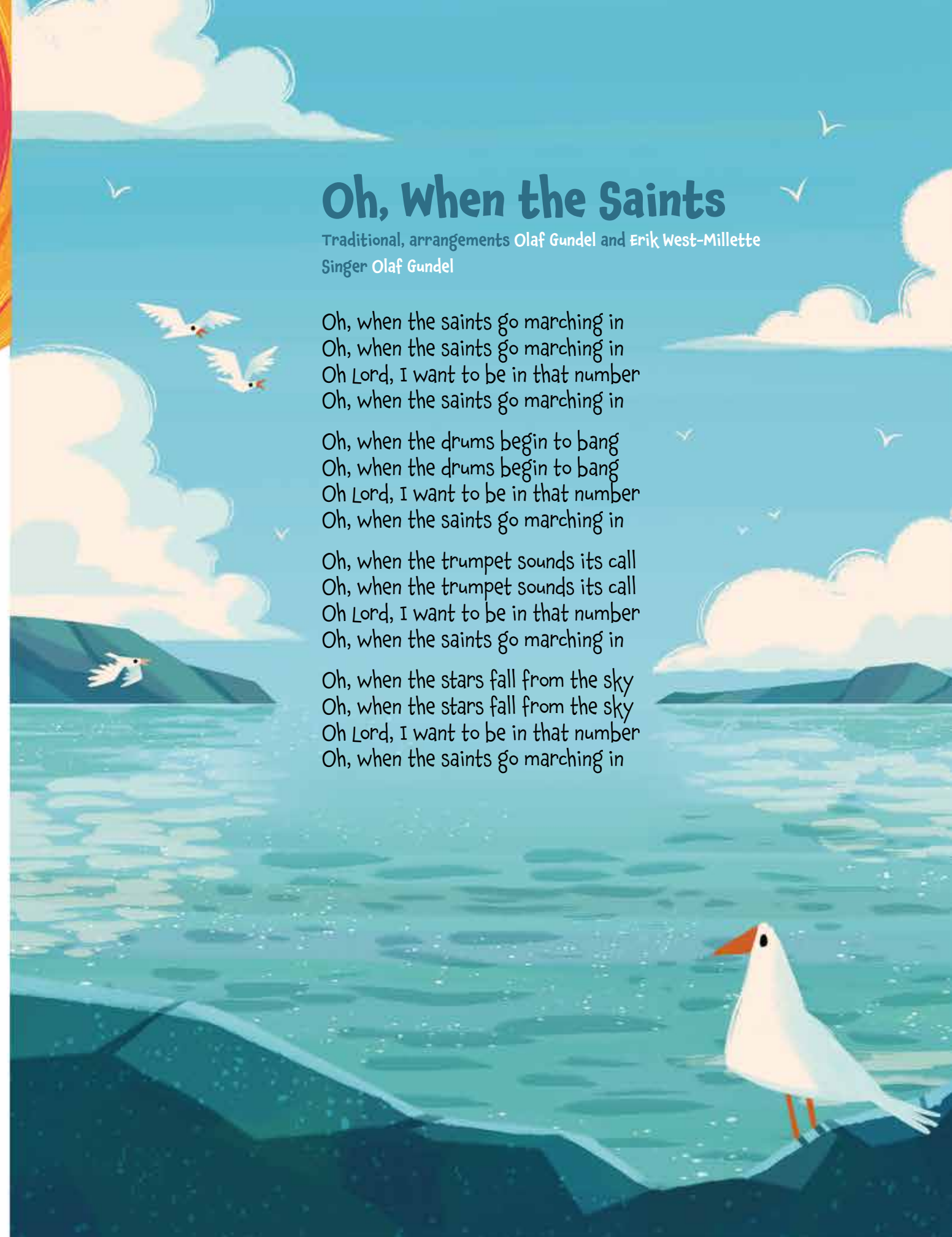
Singer Olaf Gundel

Oh, when the saints go marching in
Oh, when the saints go marching in
Oh Lord, I want to be in that number
Oh, when the saints go marching in

Oh, when the drums begin to bang
Oh, when the drums begin to bang
Oh Lord, I want to be in that number
Oh, when the saints go marching in

Oh, when the trumpet sounds its call
Oh, when the trumpet sounds its call
Oh Lord, I want to be in that number
Oh, when the saints go marching in

Oh, when the stars fall from the sky
Oh, when the stars fall from the sky
Oh Lord, I want to be in that number
Oh, when the saints go marching in



Louisiana

New Orleans

A city in the American state of Louisiana, New Orleans borders the Mississippi River, where it empties into the Gulf of Mexico. New Orleans was founded in 1718 by Jean-Baptiste Le Moyne de Bienville, a French explorer born in Montréal. The city was named in honour of Philippe I, Duke of Orléans and son of Louis XIII. In 1762, Spain took the city from France only to return it 38 years later. Ultimately, France sold New Orleans to the United States in 1803.

The city's French- and Spanish-language communities were soon joined by immigrants from Germany, Ireland, Africa, and the Caribbean, creating a diverse urban population unlike anywhere in North America. The current population of New Orleans is nearly 400,000, over half of whom are of African American descent.

Hurricanes

New Orleans is situated below sea level, leaving it especially vulnerable to flooding caused by frequent hurricanes. When Hurricane Katrina battered the city in 2005, sea surges overcame the levees and floodwalls, leaving 80 percent of New Orleans underwater. Some 1,800 people lost their lives, and a million others were displaced, making it the worst natural disaster in American history.



Culture and jazz

New Orleans' geographic location brought the city economic fortune in the nineteenth century as vast quantities of cotton grown in the southern United States were exported to Europe through the city's port. The newfound wealth gave rise to a festive atmosphere and a unique style of music that earned New Orleans an international reputation. In the early twentieth century, jazz emerged in the Storyville Quarter, which sadly no longer exists. A reflection of the city's cultural diversity, jazz borrowed from European classical music and African and Creole melodies to create a new musical style that would become immensely popular worldwide. In New Orleans, jazz is as much a part of death as life. At funerals, bands playing woeful dirges often follow the grieving family in a procession to the cemetery. Afterwards, they break out in joyous rhythms, symbolizing the full range of emotions that are part of the human experience.



Mardi Gras and a unique cuisine

New Orleans is famous for Mardi Gras, the longest-running festival in the United States. French for “Fat Tuesday,” Mardi Gras marks the Christian tradition of eating rich and fatty foods in preparation for Lent, the 40-day fasting period before Easter. Every year, more than a million tourists descend on the city to party late into the night as they parade through the famous streets of the French Quarter and enjoy the local cuisine. Popular dishes include gumbo, a spicy meat and shellfish stew inspired by Cajun and Creole cuisine, and po’ boy sandwiches, baguettes filled with roast beef, fried fish or even alligator. For dessert, the world-famous beignets from Café du Monde are one of New Orleans’ crown jewels.



Origin of the word “jazz”

Where does the word “jazz” come from? While there are many theories, it’s difficult to be certain. Given that the earliest jazz musicians were of African descent, it is believed that the term first derived from the African dialects they spoke. For example, jasi means “to live intensely,” and jaiza refers to “the sound of distant percussion.”

When jazz was born in New Orleans, locals also used other words that sound like “jazz.” The city’s musicians were nicknamed “Jasbo.” In Creole, as in French, jaser means to sit down and have a chat, and jazz bands often create the impression of a discussion among instruments. But then again, perhaps the word came from “jasmine,” which was a common ingredient in some of the most popular perfumes at the time.

The Many Styles of Jazz

Ragtime

Before jazz went mainstream, ragtime was one of the most popular music styles in the United States. Considered a forerunner of jazz, the genre is characterized by its syncopated or “ragged” dance rhythms. Named the “King of Ragtime,” Scott Joplin’s rhythmic, toe-tapping piano tunes made him one of the genre’s most famous composers. “The Entertainer” and “Maple Leaf Rag” are two of his best-known compositions..

New Orleans jazz

In the early twentieth century, diverse musical styles converged in the streets of New Orleans, including African rhythms, blues, Caribbean habaneras, gospel, ragtime and marching band music. Trumpeter Buddy Bolden drew on all those styles while composing the earliest jazz melodies. New Orleans jazz is characterized by the use of brass and woodwind instruments (trumpet, saxophone and tuba) and emphasizes improvisation.

Swing

Swing is a style of jazz that was very popular in the 1930s and 1940s. Since the main purpose was to get people dancing, swing bands performed primarily in dance halls. Given the large number of musicians in such ensembles, they came to be known as “big bands.” They generally had four sections: trumpets, trombones, saxophones and a rhythm section comprising guitar, piano, double bass and a drum set.

Bebop

In the early 1940s, jazz started to become more complex as musicians pushed the limits of their instruments in search of new sounds. Smaller jazz bands would improvise over fast rhythms in the drums or double bass. Unlike swing, the new bebop style was not meant for dancing. Emphasis was placed on the melody and the virtuosic performances of the musicians.

Latin jazz

Like the city of New Orleans itself, jazz is a diverse blend. While African and Caribbean rhythms influenced early jazz musicians, Latin American musicians infused jazz with warm Caribbean and South American sounds in New York during the 1940s. They also introduced Latin percussion instruments, such as the vibraphone and conga, to jazz ensembles.

Free jazz

Free jazz is a more experimental form of jazz. Musicians performing this style draw on bebop but push the limits even further. Here again, improvisation is at the forefront but with less emphasis on the melody. Free jazz is more of a musical exploration, free of any rules that standard jazz might impose.



Instruments



Drum set Comprising many percussion instruments, including drums and cymbals, the drum set originated in New Orleans at the same time as jazz.



Clarinet A wind instrument first used in classical and traditional music. The clarinet has many holes that are stopped by keys the player presses to sound the various notes.



Double bass The largest string instrument, the double bass can be recognized by its low sound. Rather than use a bow, jazz musicians pluck the strings with their fingers—a technique known as pizzicato.



Dobro An amplified guitar with an aluminum resonator. Players usually hold the dobro flat on their knees and play it by fingerpicking its strings.



Harmonica An instrument in the woodwind family, the harmonica works much like an accordion. The player breathes in and out through the instrument to produce the notes.



Piano A hammered string instrument with 88 keys and two or three pedals that control the instrument's resonance, the piano produces rich harmonies and lends itself to many musical styles, including jazz.



Saxophone A conical woodwind instrument, the saxophone bears the name of its Belgian inventor, Adolphe Sax, who designed it in 1846. Like the clarinet, it has keys pressed by the player to produce different notes.



Trumpet A brass instrument, the trumpet has valves depressed by the player's fingers to control the flow of air through the instrument. It can produce a wide variety of sounds over a large range.



Tuba A wind instrument in the same family as the trumpet, the tuba is much larger and produces a deeper sound. Like the trumpet, the tuba has valves. In New Orleans, the tuba is often played by a member of a marching band.

Jazz Performers



Buddy Bolden (1877–1931) Trumpeter and bandleader
Buddy Bolden is considered one of the first jazz musicians. He was born in New Orleans at the end of the nineteenth century and played a role in the birth of American jazz in the Storyville Quarter.

Jelly Roll Morton (Ferdinand Joseph Lamothe, 1890–1941)
A jazz pianist and singer from New Orleans, Jelly Roll Morton proclaimed himself the inventor of jazz in the early twentieth century. He began his career in the Storyville Quarter, where he was born.

Sydney Bechet (1897–1959) Another prominent jazz figure from New Orleans, Bechet played both clarinet and saxophone. He started out in the Storyville Quarter before taking his music to Chicago. Bechet also became a star in Paris, where he wrote the international jazz hit “Petite Fleur.”

Sweet Emma Barrett (1897–1983) A jazz pianist and singer, Sweet Emma Barrett began playing piano at the age of seven. Her career with many bands really took off when she was in her early twenties. Her musical style is considered representative of New Orleans jazz.

Duke Ellington (1899–1974) A celebrated jazz pianist and bandleader, Duke Ellington was not from New Orleans but is nonetheless an emblematic figure of early jazz. Born in Washington, D.C., he recorded many jazz standards with his big band over the course of his long career. He won 12 prestigious Grammy Awards, including one for his 1971 album New Orleans Suite.

Boswell Sisters This vocal trio from New Orleans, composed of three sisters, **Martha** (1905–1958), **Connee** (1907–1976) and **Helvetia** (1911–1988), was very popular during the 1930s. Ella Fitzgerald would often point to the group’s complex harmonies and innovative rhythms as her main source of influence.



Louis Armstrong (1901–1971) Considered one of the twentieth century’s greatest musicians of any style, Louis Armstrong was born into a low-income household living in the Jane Alley neighbourhood. He began his career in Storyville before moving on to Chicago and New York. While a virtuoso on the trumpet, Armstrong is also known for his raspy baritone voice and signature vocal style. His rendition of “What a Wonderful World” is regarded as one of the most beautiful and recognizable jazz performances of all time.

Ella Fitzgerald (1917–1996) Born in Virginia, Ella Fitzgerald is one of the most celebrated jazz singers, especially appreciated for her “scat” improvisations with nonsense syllables. Affectionately known as the “First Lady of Song,” she had a stellar career crowned with many awards, including 14 Grammy Awards. She recorded a number of duet albums with Louis Armstrong, including “New Orleans Alone.”

Fats Domino (1928–2017) A singer, pianist and bandleader from New Orleans, Fats Domino (born Antoine Dominique) began playing piano in clubs around New Orleans when he was 14 years old. At that young age, he was already a charismatic performer whose infectious rhythms never failed to get audiences dancing. In the late 1940s, he laid the groundwork for rock and roll, making him a popular star on television shows and hit parades.

Story Bia Songs Bia, Annick Brémault, Erik West-Millette **and** Olaf Gundel **Illustrations** Fanny Berthiaume
Story translation Patrick Lacoursière **and** Katherine Sehl **Voice actors** Alexa Devine (Mama Poss, Weeny Poss, Teeny Poss, Train-tracks Poss, Spitter Poss, Racoona) **and** Olaf Gundel (Papa Poss) **Singers** Olaf Gundel **and** Annick Brémault
Record producer Olaf Gundel **Arrangements** Olaf Gundel **and** Erik West-Millette **Artistic director** Roland Stringer
Graphic design Stephan Lorti **for** Haus Design **Copy editor** Katherine Sehl **Recorded and mixed by** Olaf Gundel **at** Studio Chez Frank **Mastering** Ryan Morey **Musicians** Olaf Gundel (bass, acoustic guitar, dobro, programming and percussions), Erik West-Millette (acoustic guitar and percussions), Francis Covan (violin and accordion) **and** Lévy Bourbonnais (harmonica). Annick Brémault **and** Olaf Gundel (back-up vocals)

Special thanks to Catherine Mensour, Rachel Perrault **and** Michelle Campagne.

We acknowledge the financial support of FACTOR, the Government of Canada, Canada's private radio broadcasters, and SODEC.

Additional teaching resources and activity sheets are available at www.thesecretmountain.com

LISTEN ONLINE

Find the narrated story and songs on all major streaming platforms under the title **Glory days in New Orleans!**

www.thesecretmountain.com/glory-days-in-new-orleans



 www.thesecretmountain.com
 2024 The Secret Mountain (Folle Avoine Productions)
ISBN 978-2-89836-072-5

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying, recording or any information storage and retrieval system, without permission in writing from the publisher.
Printed in China.

Mama and Papa Poss continue their musical odyssey on a boat bound for New Orleans. As they make their way down the Mississippi, a sudden hurricane tosses one of the passengers overboard. Papa Poss jumps to the rescue, pulling none other than Louis Catstrong out of the crashing waves. In thanks, the famous feline trumpet player takes the duo to his club in the French Quarter, where a group of cool cats are scratching up a new kind of music. Take a trip to the Big Easy in this swinging and scatting tale that pays homage to the city that invented jazz!



Glory Days in New Orleans! is the second story in the **We're a Possum Family Band** series, which follows Mama and Papa Poss on their travels across North America to the birthplaces of Cajun, jazz, country, rock'n'roll, blues, and traditional Quebecois music. At the end of each story, explanatory notes delve into the key figures, instruments and customs behind each genre.

MUSICAL PICTURE BOOK
LISTEN ONLINE – QR CODE INCLUDED



Find the narrated story and the songs "Alley Cat," "Oh, When the Saints" and "Possum Anthem" on all major streaming platforms. Duration: 16 minutes



51895
USA \$18.95
CAN \$19.95
UK £11.99

