

Meredith LeVande

is a children's performer with a deep commitment to putting "the child" back into children's music. Beyond and because of this, her music is pure fun. Just as on her children's albums, *Monkey Monkey Music with Meredith LeVande* and *What Are the Odds?*, audiences can detect a playful and heartfelt connection to children on her new NAPPA Honors Award-winning DVD, *Monkey Monkey Music: The Videos with Meredith LeVande*.

Meredith's performing career actually began as a successful singer/songwriter on the college circuit, where her shows often featured introspective songs about childhood struggles and finding one's true self. One day, during a performance before a crowd of families, she was inspired to improvise a presentation of traditional children's songs. It was mutual love right from the start, with a palpable connection between the performer and her audience. Meredith's identity as a children's musician was born that day — an identity that would evolve into the project now known as **Monkey Monkey Music**.

There is an emotional depth to the art of Meredith LeVande's performances for children that belongs to who she is. In the mode of Charles Dickens, her history is a tale of survival and triumph. Shortly after Meredith was born in New Jersey, her mother

became incapacitated by mental illness. Since her father was absent, Meredith was raised solely by her elderly maternal grandmother, who died when Meredith was 15. At a time when most teenagers can count on a family support system, she had to grapple with the responsibility of *being* the family support system for herself and her ailing mother. The one ally in her struggle to survive was singing.

For Meredith, performing for kids is a liberating, exhilarating experience, which comes through loud and clear on her recordings. *Monkey Monkey Music with Meredith LeVande* became an instant hit with families nationwide, was a *Parenting* magazine "Pick," and was in rotation for several years on Sirius Satellite Radio, earning a grassroots reputation as a classic children's record. *What Are the Odds?*, released in August 2010, has been praised as a "refreshing change from the norm" and "pure preschool gold."

Meredith LeVande is happily married and lives with her husband on New York City's Lower East Side.



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