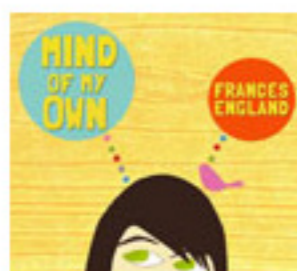




## Book Reviews: [Books With Heart](#) by Mary Quattlebaum

## CD & DVD Reviews: New and Recent Releases

By Jason Byrd



Frances England  
*Mind of My Own*

Released on November 1, 2010, Frances England's "Mind of My Own" is a terrific CD of upbeat, well-written songs that parents won't mind listening to as many times as their children like. The title track that opens the album, like the other songs here, is catchy and energetic. England's percussive acoustic guitar is steady and driving. Her voice—airy and lilting—is somewhat mesmerizing,

whether she is singing about Jacques Cousteau, ladybugs or teddy bears.

If her subject matter were geared at a slightly older audience, England could easily be a star of the indie-folk scene. Thankfully for children and parents, England has chosen to channel her musical and lyrical gifts into first-rate children's songs. Online at [francesengland.com](http://francesengland.com)



Max & Ruby  
*Bunny Party*

Max & Ruby, the popular bunny brother and sister characters created by Rosemary Wells, have been delighting readers and TV viewers for the past several years. "Bunny Party" features songs by Norman Foote taken from Koba Entertainment's latest touring theatrical production, "Max & Ruby: Bunny Party," written directed by Patti Caplette. The story begins with Ruby searching for Max

to let him know they must go shopping. Soon the duo rides the "Big Blue Bus" to a store where they encounter a robot greeter before trying to decide what to buy for the party. With each song, the story of Max & Ruby's party preparations unfold until the guests arrive and the festivities begin. Fans ages 3 and older will love listening to the antics of some of their favorite characters and will likely be induced to sing along. Visit [truenorthrecords.com](http://truenorthrecords.com) for more information.



Meredith LeVande  
*Monkey Monkey Music: The Videos*

Though you may not have heard of her, Meredith LeVande is worthy of your attention if you have young children who love music. LeVande's new DVD collection of music videos is sure to win over parents and children unfamiliar with this songwriter and educator who has been working with preschool-aged children for nearly 10 years. This collection of music videos, a National Parenting Publication Awards' 2010 Honors Winner, features 15 songs from LeVande's 2004 CD "**Monkey Monkey Music**" with appropriately engaging animation that doesn't bombard the senses. I can attest after multiple viewings with my own children (almost 2- and 4-years-old) that the animation, though comparatively

simple, is nonetheless as captivating to youngsters as is LeVande's delicate, youthful voice. Online at [www.monkeymonkeymusic.com](http://www.monkeymonkeymusic.com)

*Jason Byrd is a musician and writer. He lives in Maryland with his wife and two young daughters. For more information, visit <http://www.jasonbyrd.net>.*

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