



WEE SING AND LEARN DINOSAURS

Reviewed by Dena Smith and Sofia Nufio

Pamela Conn Beall, Susan Hagen Nipp (Authors) and Yudthana Pongmee (Illustrator)
Price Stern Sloan of Penguin Young Readers Group, 2001
16pp. board book and CD, \$9.99
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Reading a couple of books every night is a part of our family bed-time routine. I chose the book *Wee Sing and Learn Dinosaurs* by Beall, Nipp and Pongmee for us to read and review because it seemed to be appropriate for Sofia's age group (3½ years)—it is not too long and wordy and there is nothing too scary looking (Why is T-Rex ripping the flesh off some poor bleeding creature in every book?). I thought that she would like the book's simple and colorful illustrations and it includes a music CD. I also didn't find anything glaringly inaccurate in the text, so that was a definite positive. The book is 16 pages long and includes information about 11 different types of dinosaurs and talks about dinosaur footprints and fossils. The songs on the CD correspond to the pages and text in the book, but also includes a song about dinosaur extinction, as well (I know, a must for your iPod).

Sofia was immediately attracted to the style of the book. It is a board book, so it is made to take some abuse. But, what she really liked is that it had a round top with a handle cut into it. She could carry it easily wherever she went. This was a feature that I did not anticipate to be such a hit. When she opened the book and saw that it had a CD, she was really excited. But, she wanted to read the book a couple of times before diving into the music. She really enjoyed the book and pronouncing the names of the dinosaurs. There are really simple factoids about each dinosaur and these generated lots of lively discussion. Each page also had a

question for the reader that was associated with the illustration. For example, "How did Ornithomimus escape from danger?" or "How many Deinonychus are hunting in this pack?" This, of course, generated more discussion and was lots of fun. After

reading through the book several times, she then wanted to listen to the CD. Although I found some of the songs to be a little Barney-esque, they were not too unbearable. They were short, catchy and only had one or two factoids in them (which corresponded with the factoids in the text of the book). Each dinosaur has its own song of a different musical style, generating a different feel for each. Most songs have "dinosaur" noises in the background too. Unfortunately, some of these songs got stuck in my head (Ornithomimus, Ornithomimus to the tune of the Mexican Hat Dance – Not Good!). However, Sofia loved the music. We had to read the book with the CD multiple times a day, for several days. When out running errands, she would sing verses and talk about the dinosaurs. When we go to the museum, see other dinosaur books or videos, she sometimes sings a verse from the book that matches with the corresponding dinosaur. The two things that seemed to really captivate her about the songs is hearing and saying the names of the dinosaurs (she also likes the surprised looks she gets from adults when she says these names at the grocery store) and the dinosaur sounds in



the background. She is at that age where she knows that they are extinct, but also wonders if that might really be a dinosaur noise that was recorded. Each time she hears the dinosaur noises, she gets that look in her eye—that look of magic and imagination.

The combination of the book and CD has made these simple drawings and stories come to life and helped Sofia's imagination to develop the rest of the back story that accompanies each dinosaur. Although a short book, with the music and accompanying discussion it is no longer a bedtime book, but a book that serves as a nice jumping off point for longer discussions of the adventurous lives of dinosaurs and the mystery of their extinction (she hypothesizes that too much fighting might have been the cause).

Sofia's Review

DS: Do you think other kids would like this book?

SN: MmmmHmmm, Yes.

DS: Why?

SN: 'Cause it's a dinosaur book, you know! (In a tone of voice that clearly indicates that this should be obvious and I am clueless.)

DS: Is there anything you really like in the book?

SN: I like this Ankylosaur and how he can poke other guys (referring to page 4) and I really like the T-rex (referring to page 4 and 5), because he's mean! Triceratops is my favorite.

DS: What do you think of the CD?

SN: I like the music.

DS: What do you like about it?

SN: I like the noises of the dinosaurs.

DS: Was there anything in the book that you didn't like?

SN: The end part with the bones. 'Cause I'm sad about the dinosaurs.

DS: Why?

SN: Because they died! (Again, the tone of voice indicating that this should be obvious)

DS: What would you say to your friends about this book?

SN: I would say "Do you want one?" And they would say "Maybe yes, maybe no." But, they will like it!