The International Children’s Book Day (ICBD) is a yearly event sponsored by the International Board on Books for Young People (IBBY), an international, non-profit organization. Founded in 1967 by IBBY’s founder, Jella Lepman, the day is observed on or around Hans Christian Andersen’s birthday, April 2nd, to inspire a love of reading and to call attention to Children’s Books.

Each year a different National Section of IBBY has the opportunity to be the international sponsor of ICBD. It decides upon a theme and invites a prominent author from the host country to write a message to the children of the world, and a well-known illustrator to design a poster. These materials are used in different ways to promote books and reading. Many IBBY sections promote ICBD through the media and organize activities in schools and public libraries. Often ICBD is linked to celebrations around children’s books and other special events that may include authors and illustrators of children’s literature, writing competitions, or announcements of book awards.

The United States Board on Books for Young People (USBBY) is proud to be a member of the IBBY family since 1960. USBBY is thrilled to sponsor the 2021 IBBY ICBD poster with its inspirational message to children around the theme The Music of Words, written by internationally renowned children’s author Margarita Engle from the United States, with illustrations inspired by the internationally acclaimed illustrator and winner of IBBY’s 2014 Hans Christian Andersen Award, Roger Mello from Brazil.
Genesis of Poster Art: Comments by Roger Mello

Animals and people from all continents are inspired by the music of words as I was inspired by the music, the rhythm, and the beat in Margarita Engle’s poetic words. A unique beat is the pulse of diversity, the beat of literature and of the arts that helps children all over the world to find in their thoughts the voice of the “other” – the voice of the world.

IBBY – with its dedication to the rights of children, their rights as readers and the rights to good literature – has always been in my heart and soul as the possibility of a harmonious polyphony. IBBY’s International Children’s Book Day provides a unique and meaningful way each year to celebrate this chorus of children worldwide.

Children are diverse, poetic and philosophical; just listen to their poetry, just listen to the beat. In Margarita’s words: ‘heartbeat, hoofbeats, and wingbeats. In Margarita’s words: heartbeat, hoofbeats, and wingbeats.’

The Music of Words: Comments by Margarita Engle

For me, peacemaking words are personal. I come from a complicated family of refugees, immigrants, and people who have decided to stay wherever they were born. I choose to love them all equally. Poetry and stories help me feel hopeful. Rhymes, rhythms, and even the open spaces between words on a page create echoes in my mind, like the beautiful sounds you hear for a long time after ringing a bell. Language is music. It flows in a way that is both natural and human. When we share our stories and poems, our minds grow wings, fly, and meet in midair. We begin to understand each other. We become neighbors instead of strangers.

The Music of Words

When we write, our minds grow wings. When we write, our fingers sing. Words are drumbeats and flutes on the page, soaring songbirds and trumpeting elephants, rivers that flow, waterfalls tumbling, butterflies that barrel fly high in the sky! Words invite us to dance—rhymes, rhythms, heartbeats, hoofbeats, and wingbeats, old tales and new ones, fantasies and true ones. Whether you are cozy at home or racing across borders toward a new land and a strange language, stories and poems belong to you.

When we share words, our voices become the music of the future, peace, joy and friendship, a melody of hope.

Written by Margarita Engle
Translation of Claudia Soffner

DIE WURTE DER WÖRTE von Margarita Engle

Der Hoffnung.

La música de las palabras

Escrito por Margarita Engle

LA MUSIQUE DES MOTS

Ecrit par Margarita Engle

LA MÚSICA DE LAS PALABRAS

Escrito por Margarita Engle

LA MÚSICA DAS PALAVRAS

Por Margarita Engle

Comments by Roger Mello

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Animal images – as borderless this poster. Music, words, images – as borderless as the soul of IBBY!

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