



'One Little Song Can Change the World'

New album most impressive yet for Kid Pan Alley

BY JOHN McCASLIN
Rappahannock News staff
Children and adults alike will find themselves listening intently to every word of Kid Pan Alley's new album, "One Little Song Can Change the World."

And for good reason. Each of this unique album's 10 songs, written exclusively by children, delivers a much-needed lesson about bullying and respect — respect for each other, the community, the environment, even a young songwriter's dog (despite the serious nature of its message, one can't help but smile while listening to the album).

Sticks and stones may bruise my dog

*But words will never hurt him
He may be a mutt, have bad
breath, too*

*But he's my best friend and
that's more than you.*

"We see what kids are thinking by what they want to write songs about," explains Kid Pan Alley founder and Tiger Valley resident Paul Reisler. "The topic that comes up the most is bullying and respect."

He describes the new album, performed by the Grammy nominated Kid Pan Alley Band along with some amazing world-class guest vocalists — including

renowned folk singer Vance Gilbert and Northern Virginia's own Jon Carroll of Starland Vocal Band fame — is a collection of "powerful songs about how we should treat each other."

Songs that "speak of the dreams and aspirations of the children about how they want their world to be," says Reisler, who launched nationally-recognized Kid Pan Alley right here in Rappahannock County in 1999 (with the accidental discovery that kids make the greatest song co-writers).

"It's not adults writing songs about how children should act," Reisler continues, "but rather a surprisingly sophisticated worldview as seen through the eyes of children."

*Sometimes we fight to be holy
Sometimes we fight to be free
Sometimes we fight because we're
blinded by might*

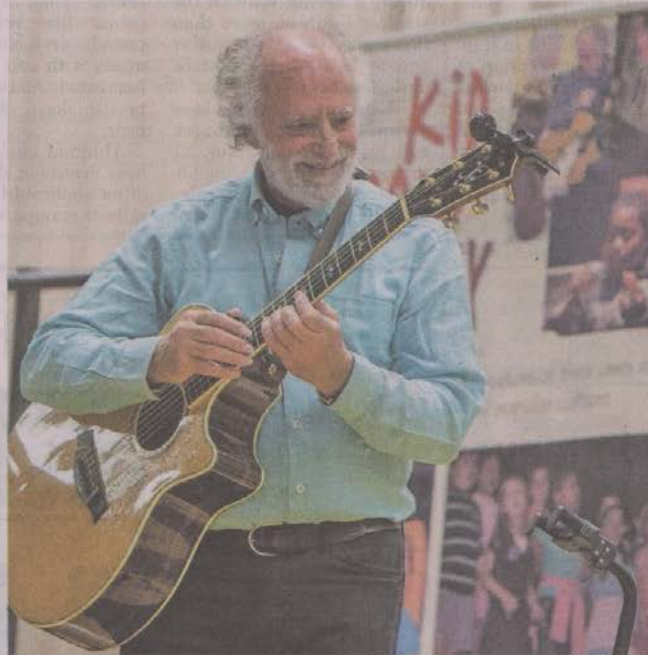
*Let's open our eyes and look
inside and finally see*

*This isn't Pearl Harbor, this isn't
World War III*

*This is just a disagreement, and
you disagree with me*

"These are some of those songs that speak from the unique worldview of children — from what they feel, not what us adults think they should feel," Reisler states.

It's not surprising the album



Reisler launched nationally-recognized Kid Pan Alley in Rappahannock County in 1999.

"We see what kids are thinking by what they want to write songs about," explains Kid Pan Alley founder and Tiger Valley resident Paul Reisler. "The topic that comes up the most is bullying and respect."

includes a song about racism, which reared its ugly head this past summer very close to home in Charlottesville. The song is simply titled "Skin," and features background vocals by 71-year-old Ysaye Barnwell, a celebrated former member of the African American a cappella ensemble Sweet Honey in the Rock.

I wanna' know what's in your heart

*Don't matter if your skin is light
or dark*

*Don't care where you live or
what you wear*

*If you got cornrows or bleached
blond hair*

*I have a dream like Dr. King
What he stood for made us*

*think
All God's children are just the
same*

*With different faces and
different names*

Reisler says lyrics like these change the kids that write them and they motivate the children that hear them. Which is what's behind the album's title, "One Little Song Can Change the World."

"We've all felt transformed by a great song at some time in our lives — the song that made us feel better on a bad day, the song that made us realize something about ourselves or our world,

that special song that gave us the courage to stand up for what was right," Reisler states.

"All the songs on the very first Kid Pan Alley 'Tidal Wave of Song' were written with kids in Rappahannock," he adds. "That album started a tidal wave of over 2,700 songs with over 50,000 children across the country."

On the new album, Ms. Wharton's class at Rappahannock Elementary wrote "Wake Up," a fascinating song about not bullying the environment with pollution.

*We covered up the sun with all
our pollution*

*In our darkest times, we need a
good solution*

*The seas are rising, and glaciers
are sinking*

*There's a hole in the ozone —
what were we thinking?*

*Wake up, Mr. Sun. Wake up,
everyone!*

"There are songs that have inspired great change throughout history and songs that have changed us as individuals," Reisler recalls. "There are the thousands of Kid Pan Alley songs that have changed the tens of thousands of children who wrote them and the hundreds of thousands of people who have heard them. We hope one of those little songs might help change the world for our children."

Or, as he puts it another way: "May these songs help heal the wounds."

➤ Check out Kid Pan Alley's new website — www.KidPanAlley.org — which has a link to purchase "One Little Song Can Change the World." In addition, the album can be found in Washington at R.H. Ballard Gifts and Home Decor, in Sperryville at Haley Fine Art, and in Warrenton at Drum & Strum Music Center.