

Mp3 Vanessa Trien - Hot Air Balloon

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Up, up and away. Take a musical ride with this get-up-and-dance collection of original songs by children's songwriter and music educator Vanessa Trien. Mixes blues, pop, bluegrass, acoustic folk, country, 50's rock n roll and tropical sounds. 11 MP3 Songs KIDS/FAMILY: General Children's Music, KIDS/FAMILY: Kid Friendly Details: With a master's degree in education from Harvard University, Vanessa Trien must be the best-qualified children's musician facing young audiences today. But as every teacher knows, kids don't care about a solid-gold resume ... and Vanessa never lets her credentials get in the way of having fun. When she channels Chuck Berry and launches into a tune like "Rockin' Rocket," this teacher's lesson plan is simple: Let the good times roll! "I'm really conscious of trying to make music that parents can enjoy, too," says Vanessa, whose love of folk, pop, blues, jazz and world music is evident throughout every song on Hot Air Balloon, her first CD of children's music. "With Hot Air Balloon, the idea was not to create a kids' album, but to create good music with kid-friendly lyrics and sophisticated, interesting instrumentation," Vanessa says. "I had recorded a previous CD of acoustic folk music, but I'd never done a children's album before and neither had [producer] Neale Eckstein. So, thankfully, we didn't have any notion of 'dumbing down' the music. We wanted variety, fun, accomplished musicianship ... and of course, we wanted a get-up-and-dance groove!" Vanessa has placed herself in service of the groove for her entire life. A New York City native who says her dad spent much of his law-school career practicing guitar, Vanessa was educated to value music as highly as literature and algebra. Starting her study of classical piano at age five, Vanessa fit right in with a family she describes as "one big musical comedy, although definitely not scripted!" With guitar and piano, Vanessa also became an accomplished singer, primarily self-taught and encouraged by her parents in family sing-alongs. A trip to Costa Rica dramatically broadened her musical horizons, and she brought her new perspective back to the States as she settled, post-college, into performing and teaching as artist-in-residence in New York City public schools. One of her proudest achievements was working with second- and third-graders at a Bronx school that had no music program at all. By the time Vanessa was through, the school had a thriving chorus of 50 voices performing a wide variety of music, complete with choreography. The experience

prompted Vanessa to return to school for her master's degree, and soon after she was teaching at the Cambridge Montessori School. There, with friends Sara Wheeler and Steve Roslonek (Steve Songs), she co-wrote a giddy space-age musical, "Blast Off!" "We had so much fun with that, and so did the kids," she recalls. "In fact, 'Backward Alphabet Craze,' a song on Hot Air Balloon, comes out of that show, along with a few other songs from the CD. We had Martians curious about earthlings, and there were some things they didn't understand, like the alphabet which they learned backwards. You've got to listen to it to comprehend just how weird the alphabet sounds backwards!" Vanessa and Sara Wheeler also produced an album of student-written songs before Vanessa returned to performing as a folk singer-songwriter and, increasingly, to working as a producer of arts-related events. She was in the early stages of planning her next adult-music CD when she learned she was also in the early stages of producing her first baby and the news sent her right back to her early love of working with children. Neale collected a prodigious assortment of back-up from musician pals from across the country who recorded in his studio or sent electronic files, using Vanessa's guitar and vocal tracks as the backbone. With such a fantastic assortment of musicians adding their creative input (see the complete list of musicians on the Friends page), Vanessa and Neale layered the instrumentation in the studio. Vanessa says, "It was just wonderful to have that opportunity to think over what would work best and exactly which musician would provide the sound. I couldn't be happier with the method and the music!" In addition to her "favorite gig" as Ellis's mom, Vanessa is planning to promote Hot Air Balloon with some live appearances. And she's teaching again ... "my youngest students yet, newborns through age 5," she says proudly. "It's a program called Music Together, with parent-child classes, and I just love seeing the little ones concentrate on the music and motion. The babies are so intent on watching, listening, and absorbing the music, and then all of a sudden, they'll start to move and participate and you can just see their musical sensibility being activated. It's the most exciting thing ever! I love the work that I do."

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