



## Américas Award Books on Carnival

***Carnaval***, George Ancona.

Ancona's exquisite color photographs document the preparations leading up the annual five-day festival in Olinda, Brazil, as well as details related to specific carnival events. In an explanatory note, the author indicates that he specifically chose to focus on this small town in northeastern Brazil because everyone in the town participates in the celebration of folklore, music, and cultural traditions that demonstrate Brazil's rich blend of African, European, and Native peoples. (Grades 2-6) **1999 Commended Title.**

***Celebrate in Central America***, Joe Viesti and Diane Hall, Photographs by Joe Viesti. Throughout Central America, holiday festivities offer a rich blend of indigenous and European traditions. Stunning color photographs accompanied by a brief text provide details about the origins of eight holidays and how each one is celebrated in a specific Central American town. Includes Día de los Muertos (Sacatepéquez, Guatemala); Baile de la Conquista (Chichicastenango, Guatemala); Semana Santa (Sonsonate, El Salvador); San José Fair (Copán Ruinas, Honduras); Virgin of Masaya Celebration (Mesaya, Nicaragua); Columbus Day/Día de la Raza (Puerto Limón, Costa Rica) and two distinctive ways of celebrating Carnival (San Pedro, Belize, and Las Tablas, Panama). (Grades 3-5) **1997 Commended Title.**

***Drummer Boy of John John***, Mark Greenwood, Illustrated by Frané Lessac.

This book's story is inspired by that of Winston "Spree" Simon, the creator of Trinidad and Tobago's national instrument, the steel drum. Drums and other percussive instruments take center stage in young Winston's quest to compete to have the best band in his island's Carnival parade. The celebration of sound drives the story, with onomatopoeia serving as an effective device to draw the reader into the fun feeling of Carnival. Young Winston hears percussive instruments all around him, and, discovering a wealth of sounds from all sorts of found objects, he eventually finds a "junkyard band," which takes first prize. The illustrator's use of vibrant tones and people in motion capture the energy of the occasion. Whimsical scenes in the junkyard and beyond add interest to the telling of this tale for young readers. (Grades K-3) **2013 Commended Title.**

***Fiesta Babies***, Carmen Tafolla, Illustrated by Amy Córdova.

Follow the fiesta babies through this bilingual book as they enjoy Mexican-American customs and culture. Perfect for very young readers, *Fiesta Babies* is light on text and

heavy on vibrant illustrations. A glossary is provided at the end to explain the Spanish terms that are used in the mainly English text. (Grades K-2) **2011 Commended Title.**

***Malaika's Costume***, Nadia L. Hoh, illustrated by Irene Luxbacher.

In Nadia Hohn's touching and timely picture book, we are introduced to Malaika, a young girl living at home with her Grandma in the Caribbean while her mother is working far away in icebox-like Canada to provide a better life for her family. Told in distinctive Caribbean patois, Malaika's voice genuinely rings out to the reader, as she describes both her excitement about the upcoming Carnival celebrations, and her feelings of sadness and disappointment in missing her mother on this special holiday. Accompanied by colorful collage-style illustrations by Irene Luxbacher that bring Malaika's island home alive, the reader is introduced to the costumes and characters of Carnival. There are also numerous significant visual details to catch a young reader's eye, such as drawings presumably from Malaika herself that provide a window into her emotional state throughout the story. Hohn's demonstrates a deft, expert touch in handling challenging topics such as family separation and immigration in a way that speaks sincerely to young readers while presenting a tale of vibrant strength, ingenuity and spirit. (Grades K-3). **2016 Honorable Mention.**

***Vejigante Masquerader***, Lulu Delacre.

Ramon longs to participate in Carnival. He works hard to make a costume and buy a mask, so he can join in the pranks with all the other masqueraders. Inspired by Carnival in Ponce, Puerto Rico where the author grew up, this bilingual story overflows with plentiful detail, and offers marvelous possibilities for sharing both language and culture, including an introductory description, glossary of chants, vocabulary, and instructions on mask making. The closeness of family and community threads throughout; the joy and color of Carnival abound. Searching for the twenty-eight hidden lizards (one for each day of February) draws the reader even more deeply into the illustrations. (Grades K-5). **1993 Américas Award Winner.**