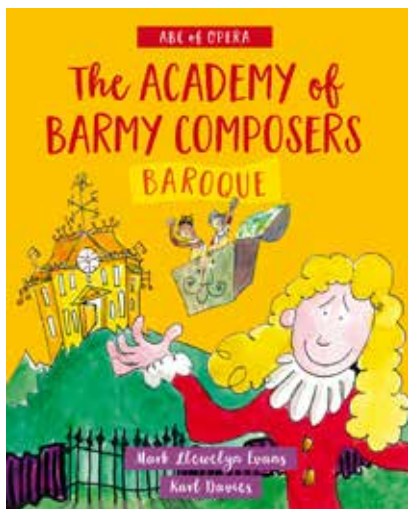


ABC of Opera series

ABC of Opera: Baroque by Mark Llewelyn Evans



- Author Mark Llewelyn Evans
- Illustrator Karl Davies
- Hardback, 64 pages
- Size 250 x 200mm
- Age 8-11
- Price £9.99
- ISBN 9781912213863

Author and illustrator's websites:

www.markllewelynevans.co.uk

www.abcofopera.com

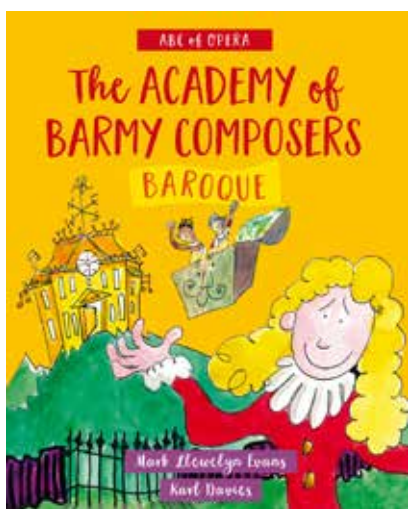
www.karlpic.co.uk

Opera

Opera is a genre of music that can be used as a hook for many different activities. The book can begin the children's own journey of preparing for a performance in the school – they can learn about all of the elements needed for a 'show' and little by little, create, plan, write, make, compose, rehearse, invite, advertise & finally perform.

The children's wellbeing and discussions of their emotions are key features throughout the ideas proposed.

Playing various pieces of music in the background whilst they are doing activities will familiarise the children with classical music and they will recognise some from TV adverts or programmes.



Front cover

Let's talk: Discuss the front cover:

Why is it a hard cover? (to protect/ look after – what other things or people protect).

What can we find on it? (Title/ Author/ Illustrator).

What do you think about the pictures? The colours? The style of the font?

Can you imagine what might happen in the story?

What is an **academy** (another word for school) What does **barmy** mean? Can you think of other words that mean barmy?

What is a **composer**? How is a composer different to a songwriter?

Let's create: Try to create a front cover for a book about your school, think of an interesting title.



Back cover

Let's talk: Discuss the back cover:

What information is on the back of the book?

There are some reviews? What is a review? Who wrote the reviews for this book? Can you do this as a job?

There is a blurb – what does that mean?

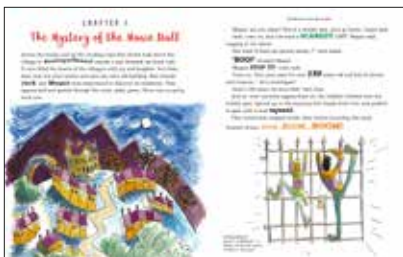
There some other things too...the printers name/ the ISBN number/ titles of other books in the series.

Let's create: Write a blurb to go with your own book or a favourite book you have read place the min the reading area – a written & starred review.

For younger children the teacher can be the scribe and they can write one together as a group/ class.

Record a review of something – a book/ toy/ game/ tv programme.

Look for as many items as you can that have an ISBN on them – put them on a display table.



Chapter 1: The mystery of the music hall

Let's talk: Talk about what happened to Megan and Jack in the music hall. Ask the children if there's a music hall in town? Have they been to one? What did they go to see? What do they think inside the music hall looked like after 40 years? **Discumbobulated** is a fun word – how many syllables does it have? Think of other fun words and clap the number of syllables – start with the children's names.

What is a **mystery**?

Learn to say welcome in different languages and place signs on the door with happy faces on them.

Let's investigate: Hide items relating to the story or pictures and take the children on a journey of discovery outdoors.

Let's create: Look at drawings by Rhiannon Ifans and the drawings by Karl Davies in the book, compare and discuss them, then paint or draw pictures of a town with a music hall in it using different craft materials.



Chapter 2: The Academy

Let's talk: Flying to **Florence** – who has been to **Italy**? How did you get there? Look at a map of Italy to see where Florence is. Think of other ways to travel – ake a list then alliterate with a place name or country e.g. Driving to Denmark, Running to Rhondda, Skating to Swansea, Biking to Barcelona.

Professor Peri is the **inventor** of opera – what is an inventor? Find out who invented different things we use including Welsh inventors.

Learn the Italian words on page 14 – what are they in Welsh?

Let's create: Using recycled materials invent a box/ trunk to keep items neat on the table.

Create pictures using different lines and ways of mark making – zig zags, straight, curved, spots, splashes etc.



Chapter 3: The stories and the glories

Let's talk: The **Baa-rockers** – talk about the **composers** and listen to some classical music. What can the children hear? Can they recognise any instruments? Show them a clip of an opera – perhaps in Florence outdoors or in Milan. What can they see/ hear? How does it make them feel? Is the music fast/ slow, happy/ sad?

Let's create: Opera is a lavish show – they could create their opera set in a box with scenery, characters and choose music to tell their very own opera story – this could be in pairs or as an individual.

Create a set of paddle faces depicting different emotions or characters from stories with different expressions. Discuss these feelings, when they happen, how to deal with them, what they mean.



Chapter 4: Maestro Monte

Let's talk: Extinct! What does the word mean? Opera could be **forgotten** and become extinct like some animals. Think of ways to stop opera becoming extinct so that people remember...writing, drawing, songs etc.

Ask the children about falling out with friends, how did it feel? Why were Professor Peri and Monteverdi falling out?

What sort of things do friends do to show they care for each other?

Read the story of Orpheus – it is a Greek story or legend, introduce different types of stories – fable, tale, myth etc.

Learn the new Italian words on page 22 & 24.

Let's meditate: 'Agitato' – When we are 'agitated' we need to calm down – mindfulness is a good way to do this, play some soothing classical music and do some breathing exercises – ask the children to close their eyes & to imagine they are in a beautiful far away land.... after a few minutes ask them open their eyes and relax.



Chapter 5: Fantastica Francesca

Let's talk: Francesca the first **Prima donna** – this means first lady or important lady, ask the children about ladies who they think are important to them. Explain that the term **prima donna** is also used for ladies who are demanding like famous people – tell them about some of the things famous people demand in hotels when they stay there.

Get them to make lists of demands if they were famous – this is only pretend and would not of course be true of these wonderful children.

Let's orate: Learn the words on page 26 & 27. Recap all the words learnt to date.

Prepare cards to give out to the children to play a game of snap. You say the word in Italian, if they have the word on their card they hold it up and say the word.

Let's celebrate: Plan a show or competition where the children prepare by painting, dancing, singing, writing- The Academy's got talent show.



Chapter 6: It's all over the world

Let's talk: Opera is **all over the world**, where have the children been to or heard of. Show them flags of different countries and one fact about that country e.g. Denmark – is where Lego comes from.

Sort flags with symmetry to the ones that are non-symmetrical.

Let's investigate: Choose five countries some from the book and others – pick out from a hat one country every day and investigate / learn / discover all you can about that country.

Let's celebrate: Make a target display with the inner circle labelled –nearby, the next circle – in Wales, the next - in Europe and the last – in the world. The children will collect information, print pictures, make postcards . write words and place pictures of instruments and composers on the place names in each circle to create a global celebration display.

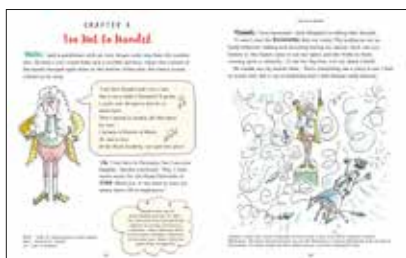


Chapter 7: Doc Blow and Purcell

Let's talk: Teachers and pupils – get the children to think of something that they are really good at and feel confident doing, it can be anything from painting to solving puzzles, writing to playing football. They will each have an opportunity to teach the class something over the next week and to become the teacher.

Going to **England**, how do we get there? What do we pass? Go over? Under? Through? Create a picture map of the journey from the school to **London** with landmarks along the way and information about them.

Let's dedicate: 'My brilliant book of me' – to celebrate every child's abilities and passions they will create a personal book of the things they enjoy, feel confident doing and things they have been investigating to find out more. These can be displayed in the reading area for all to share or kept as personal diaries.



Chapter 8: Too hot to Handel

Let's talk: Look at the two pictures of **Handel** in the book, as the children to use adjectives to describe him in each picture e.g. sad, cross, angry & happy, content etc.

How important was Handel? How do you know he was important?

Learn the German words on page 32.

Let's create: Play the '**Royal Fireworks**' music and let the children draw, paint write words & phrases on a large piece of paper portraying their interpretations of the music – this can be done in pairs or groups.

Let's investigate: Look at websites/ catalogues to see what chairs are made of, create a book of chairs from different eras, for different purposes/ different rooms. Make some chairs out of everyday materials e.g. lego, pipe cleaners, straws, paper, clay – which is the strongest?



Chapter 9: Luckless Lully

Let's talk: Lully was **French**, he used a **stick** to keep the beat, how else can we keep a beat – what items or parts of our body could we use – head, hand, foot, elbow – which is the easiest? Play various types of music & encourage the children to listen to the beat (clap/stamp).

Let's collect: how many items can you find in two minutes that have red, white or blue on them.

How many items can you think of that use a stick of some sort e.g. broom, snooker cue, shovel.



Chapter 10: Will Opera live forever?

Let's talk: Recall the ways discussed previously of remembering and **keeping things alive** (from extinction)

How do we remember things? Explain simply the brain has neurons – a bit like dots, or seeds with roots they are not connected - until we do, or hear, or taste or smell something then the dots or roots join up. When we do the same thing over & over again it becomes a memory, the more we do it the stronger the links.

This is neuroscience made easy – show pictures or play familiar songs to the children to prove the point.

Marching is a particular rhythm used in music and for people when they walk in a certain way – play marching music for the children to listen and march along to. In a large space they can march in different directions – left, right, North, West etc

Let's investigate: Look for and create a list of funny place names or make some up of your own.



Chapter 11: Cruel Cromwell

Let's talk: It's nice to be important, but it's more important to be nice – **Cromwell** was not a nice person – if Cromwell were to ban things now what are the top 5 things you would miss the most?

Discuss how children around the world do not have access to as many opportunities as the pupils may have and that memory days are just as important more so than gifts and stuff.

Cromwell was Lord **Protector** – what do we protect in school, at home? Do we make sure something remains safe? Think of all the ways in which we help protect – environmental awareness e.g. recycling.

Let's donate: Decide on one thing that the children could go without for 24hrs – let them vote on which one from a list of 6 e.g. to go without tv, no chocolate, no computers, no playing outdoors and to organise an event in school to raise money for a charity – this could be a local or global one.



Chapter 12: The Opera heroes

Let's talk: What is a **hero**? How do we describe heroes? Look at pictures of super heroes from films or comics then think about our local superheroes. Why are they special? What do they do to be superheroes?

Let's create: Investigate roles & jobs in the community. Create certificates and trophies to give local superheroes from the class explaining why they are so special – they could be invited in to a special coffee morning or assembly.



Chapter 13: The Return

Let's talk: The mission – Jack and Megan now have a mission to **keep Baroque opera alive**, ask the children what items would they have brought back in the trunk from the Academy? How would they share the stories? Set the children a mission to share their knowledge of... Wales, toys, games, playing, school for a future generation or if they had to explain to an alien from another planet.

Learn the new words on page 49 & 52.

Let's create: In groups get the children to order pictures from the story, then to create an ABC Baroque boardgame including watch out cards & move forward or back spaces on large sheets of card.



Chapter 14: It's just the beginning!

Let's talk: The **letter** – Who else could have written to Jack & Megan? What would they have said? Would they have been so kind? Discuss different types of letters, notes, memos etc.

Learn the new words on page 55.

Read the final page (66).

Let's write: Decide who you would like to write a letter to from the story, it can be any of the characters, tell them about what you are doing to keep opera alive and ask them what they are up to.



Interesting information P56 - 65

Read the information with / to the children then...

Baroque: Create a question cube with pictures on it, roll the dice and ask the children what we learnt e.g. Busy Bach, Galileo, Baroque timpani etc.

Voices: Make a singing display with characters that sing each of the voices placed in the correct order.

Listen to some music and pick out the different voices e.g. Handel's Messiah.

Composers & other Baroque composers: Fun fact files, as a home activity get the children to create a fun

fact file about themselves. Create a display or book about the composers or a bunting display with name & dates on the front & facts on the back of each flag.

Heroes and accomplices: These are the characters in the story, who would be the main characters in your

story, you, your teacher, your dog or cat, a magic ipad?





Questions & answers: Some interesting new words relating to the opera, give each group two words then they will explain to the others in the class through pictures, movement & explaining.

The story of Orpheus: Monteverdi's opera was based on a Greek tale, read the story then discuss what they thought? How did it make them feel? Can they think of a Welsh folk tale that would make a good opera?

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ABC OF OPERA SERIES:

- 1. Baroque: publication April 2019**
- 2. Classical: publication April 2021**
- 3. Romantic: publication 2021**
- 4. Modern: publication 2022**

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