ABC of Opera: Classical

Mark Llewelyn Evans and Karl Davies
Publishing 29 April 2021

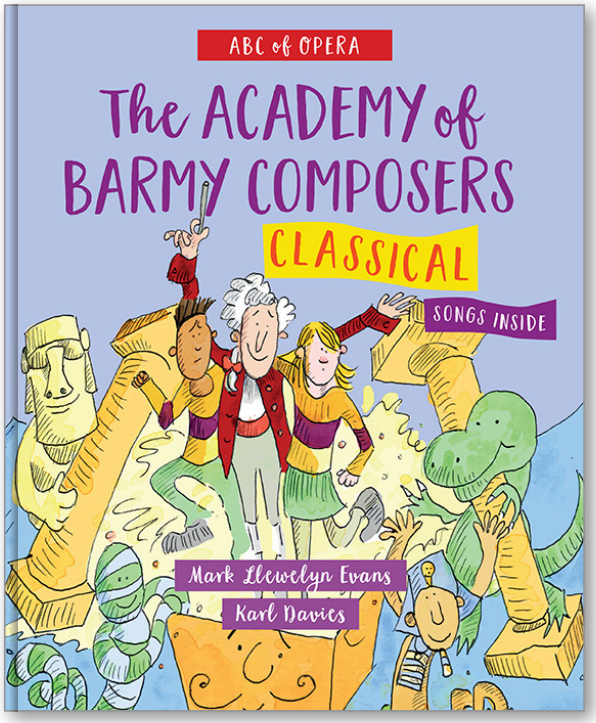
A spectacular musical adventure for children through the 500-year history of opera

Written by world-renowned opera singer and founder of ABC of Opera Productions Mark Llewelyn Evans, *ABC of Opera: Classical* provides children with an enjoyable and educational first glimpse into the often daunting world of opera and classical music.

When a school trip to the Natural History Museum in London reunites Jack and Megan with their old friend Trunk, they are whisked away to the Academy of Barmy Composers and the cities of Salzburg, Vienna and Paris for an adventure in opera's classical period (1750–1820). Tasked with taking the music and stories of Windy Wolfie (Mozart, the penniless prodigy), Tortellini Rossini (the king of the dining table) and the moody but resilient Bilious Beethoven back to the present, will they be able to triumph over the return of Mozart's most evil creation?

An accessible, fun and fact-based introduction to opera for primary school children, *ABC of Opera: Classical* has already received great endorsements from a variety of people, including **Joanna Lumley** who says, 'The Academy of Barmy Composers is gloriously full of fun and facts, illustrated lavishly and quite irresistible. Fabulous in every way.' **Professor Teresa Cremin** of the Open University calls it, 'A text that tempts, informs and delights. A pleasure to read.', while **Eloise Williams** says, 'Book 2 from the ABC is a vibrant read with dynamic characters leaping from every page. Visually thrilling, it's a dazzlingly colourful whirlwind ride through a fascinating world.' The book has also received praise from **The National Children's Orchestra** who say, 'The history of classical music has never been so much fun!'

Inspired by Mark's own workshops with ABC of Opera Production and the Horrible Histories books written by **Terry Deary**, who praised *ABC of Opera: Baroque* saying, 'The pace and the characterisation are top class. It's a page-turner as well as being full of interesting facts', this book covers a number of key teaching points, including the history of music, a large range of musical terms, the lives of a number of prominent composers, as well as the importance of sign language, working together and showing that Any Body Can.



ABC of Opera Classical
Author Mark Llewelyn Evans
Illustrator Karl Davies
Format: Paperback, 64 pages
Size: 250 x 200mm
Publication: 29 April 2021
ISBN: 9781912213870
Price: £8.99

Combining facts, jokes, songs, brilliant illustrations and a humorous story make this book perfect for use as a teaching resource in schools as well for home-learning.

With two further ABC of Opera books planned covering the Romantic and Modern music eras, these musical adventures through the history of opera are set to provide a unique and creative way to introduce children to this artform for many more years.

Other books in the ABC of Opera series:

- Baroque – 9781912213863
- Y Baróc – 9781913134266
- Classurol – 9781913634254

Graffeg Limited 15 Neptune Court, Ocean Way, Cardiff Bay, CF24 5PJ, UK. Tel. +44(0)2922404970, media@graffeg.com
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Mark Llewelyn Evans is the founder and creative director of ABC of Opera Productions, which tours UK-wide introducing children to the stories and glories of the opera through music and storytelling. Mark is a professional opera singer who has sung the principal baritone roles for many of the opera houses and lives in Llantrisant, Wales. Mark was the winner of the Amati Guildhall Creative Entrepreneurs' Award 2019.

A short Q and A with Mark Llewelyn Evans:

1) How would you summarise *ABC of Opera Classical* and how it follows on from Baroque?

There's so much in this second adventure for our opera heroes. From a school trip to the natural history museum they are swished for a pit stop to The Academy where Hectic Haydn sends them immediately to Salzburg to meet the gassy genius (Windy Wolfie). Jack and Megan gate-crash a royal appointment with the Hapsburgs and the Crazy Classicals learn a new way to communicate with Bilious Beethoven. Then it's to Paris where Jack and Megan meet the Charismatic Chevalier, an evil Queen and a magic flute that saves the day just before the guillotine falls!

2)What inspired you to write ABC of Opera books?

I was about 16 when I saw my first opera at the Grand theatre, Swansea with the Welsh National opera. I had never thought of a career in the arts, especially opera, but that performance stirred something in me. In 1988 I started my study at the Guildhall school of music and Drama which was followed by an intensive year at the National opera studio, London. For over 25 years I have sung title roles for many opera houses but I have also delivered school workshops as I strongly believe that igniting children's imaginations is one of the greatest gifts we can give. In 2016 I started my own school workshop company, ABC of Opera. I wanted the story of opera to deliver invaluable life-lessons to children through a lively exploration of the lives and music of the world's greatest composers, whilst also building character, celebrating difference and encouraging creativity. The ABC of Opera has now delivered over 200 workshops to primary schools across the UK with remarkable results and are now working in partnership with University of Wales, Trinity St David and the Guildhall School of Music and Drama.

3)Tell us about some of the unique characters we meet during the story.

The Academy of Barmy Composers is where history and fiction come together and that's why the research takes me months. In Classical we meet Hectic Haydn (the father of the Classical period), Windy Wolfie (Mozart), Bilious Beethoven (Beethoven), Marie Antoinette, Tortellini Rossini (Rossini), Charismatic Chevalier (The Chevalier Saint George), Queen of the Night, The Travelling Trunk and of course our opera heroes Jack and Megan.

Karl Davies is an exciting children's book illustrator whose work brings the cast and characters of the ABC of Opera vividly to life. His other illustration work includes three children's stories with Roy Noble: Walking with Bamps, The B Team, and its sequel, The B Team Win. Karl is a landscape artist and lives in Pontypridd, Wales.

A short Q and A with Karl Davies

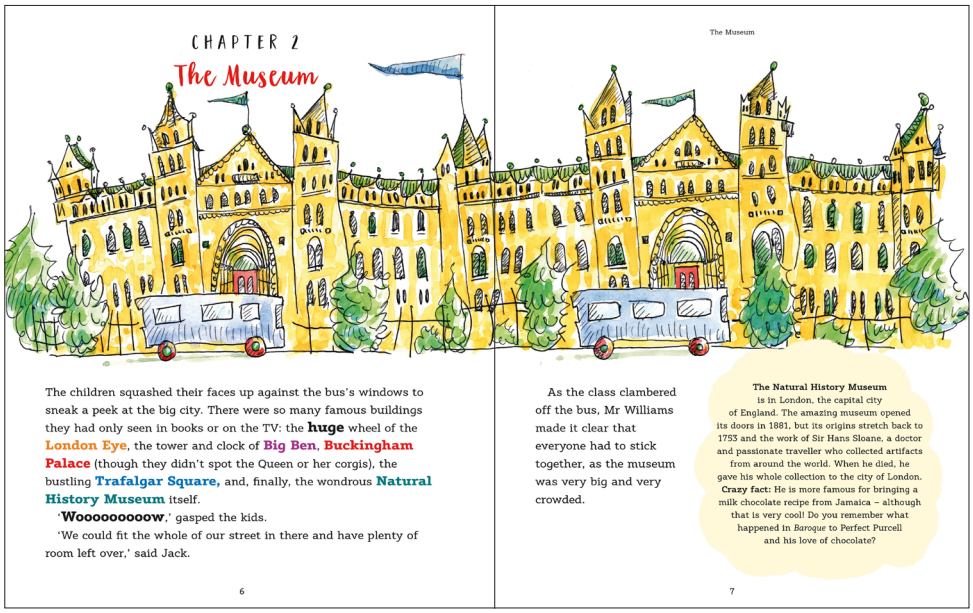
1) What materials did you use to create the illustrations and what is your process?

Mixed Media, so a bit of everything that works. It pays to experiment and try materials out before starting the final illustrations. I imagine how it might look over several weeks and months, drawing a lot of roughs and sketching as I go. Any excuse to draw is really my cup of tea.

2) Do you have a favourite illustration and/or character? Tell us about it.

I'm particularly drawn to Beethoven. Although he may appear to be frowning most of the time, I like to think it's his resting face. He seems to be the most unaffected and stoic of the group.

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CHAPTER 2

The Museum

The children squashed their faces up against the bus's windows to sneak a peek at the big city. There were so many famous buildings they had only seen in books or on the TV: the **huge** wheel of the **London Eye**, the tower and clock of **Big Ben**, **Buckingham Palace** (though they didn't spot the Queen or her corgis), the bustling **Trafalgar Square,** and, finally, the wondrous **Natural History Museum** itself.

'**Wooooooooow**,' gasped the kids.

'We could fit the whole of our street in there and have plenty of room left over,' said Jack.

As the class clambered off the bus, Mr Williams made it clear that everyone had to stick together, as the museum was very big and very crowded.

The Natural History Museum is in London, the capital city of England. The amazing museum opened its doors in 1881, but its origins stretch back to 1753 and the work of Sir Hans Sloane, a doctor and passionate traveller who collected artifacts from around the world. When he died, he gave his whole collection to the city of London. **Crazy fact:** He is more famous for bringing a milk chocolate recipe from Jamaica – although that is very cool! Do you remember what happened in *Baroque* to Perfect Purcell and his love of chocolate?



CHAPTER 3

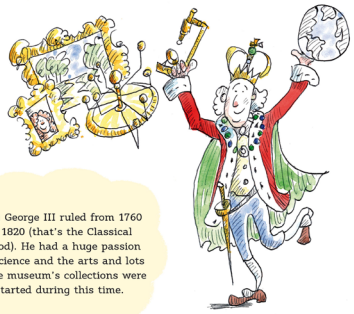
Finding an Old Friend

Megan followed Jack's voice to the museum's vaults, home to gems of every colour and black-as-coal meteorites from distant galaxies.

'Woo-hoo! I'm in space,' whooped Jack, dancing around like a weightless astronaut and waving his arms carelessly in all directions.

'Watch out, Jack, there are loads of breakable things in here.'

Just as Megan was finishing her warning, Jack toppled backwards and bumped into one of the glass cabinets. Little did he know he had disturbed a very familiar friend . . .



King George III ruled from 1760 to 1820 (that's the Classical period). He had a huge passion for science and the arts and lots of the museum's collections were started during this time.

TAP TAP TAP . . .
TAP TAP TAP – – –
TAP TAP TAP . . .

'What have you done now? I told you to be careful,' whispered Megan.

TAP TAP TAP TAP TAP TAP TAP TAP TAP.
. . . – – – . . .

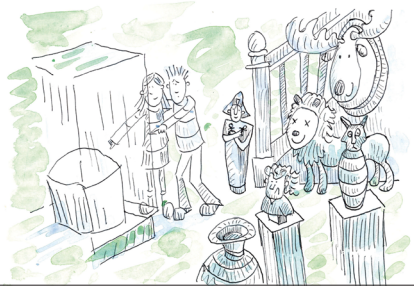
'Hold on, that's an S.O.S, and it's coming from the cabinet!' said Jack.

They cautiously stepped closer and peered inside.

'It can't be, can it?' said Megan.

'TRUNK!' shouted Jack, brimming with excitement.

Morse Code was invented during the 1830s by Samuel Morse (1791–1872). It uses a system of dots, dashes and spaces to represent the alphabet, numbers and punctuation and a machine called a telegraph to send messages along wires using electrical signals. This totally changed the speed at which newspapers, businesses and others could share news.



Graffeg Limited 15 Neptune Court, Ocean Way, Cardiff Bay, CF24 5PJ, UK. Tel. +44(0)2922404970, media@graffeg.com
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