

ABC of Opera: Classical

Mark Llewelyn Evans and Karl Davies

Publishing 29 April 2021

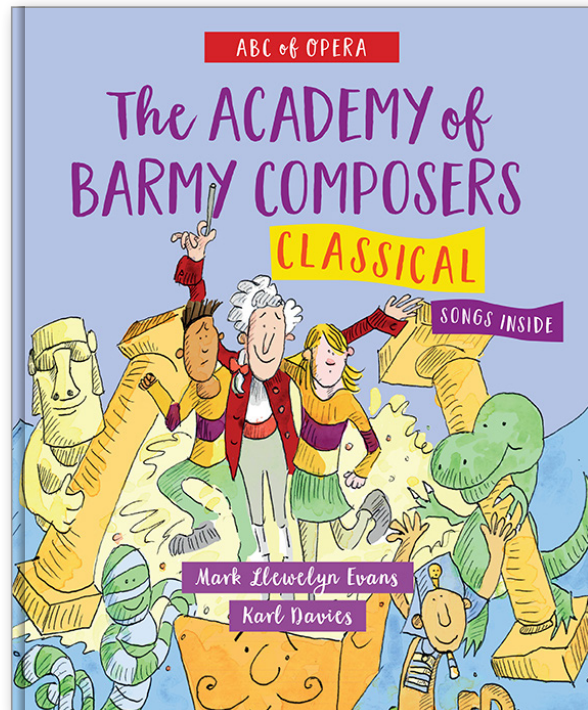
A spectacular musical adventure for children through the 500-year history of opera

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

Notes to Editors

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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 Classics 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.

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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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