

Babar the Elephant



QUEENSLAND SYMPHONY
ORCHESTRA

ALONDRA DE LA PARRA
MUSIC DIRECTOR



LEARNING
CONCERTS 2018





Babar the Little Elephant

Music Composed by

Francis Poulenc

Original story composed by

Jean de Brunhoff

Babar the Little Elephant is a story published in France in 1931 by French author and artist Jean de Brunhoff. The story was invented by his wife Cécile as a bedtime story for their children. Jean illustrated the story and created a book and then went on to write and illustrate six more *Babar* books.

Their son Laurent took over and has continued to write and illustrate *Babar* books.

Listen: [Babar the Little Elephant](#) narrated by Barry Humphries and performed by Melbourne Symphony Orchestra.



COMPOSER – Francis Poulenc

Francis Poulenc was born in France 1899 and died in 1963. He played piano and composed many pieces for operas, ballet, orchestras and small ensembles.

When Poulenc visited with his cousins for a holiday, the children asked him to “play” the story of *Babar the Little Elephant* and placed the book on the piano. Poulenc improvised on the piano colouring the story with music for the children.

The story with music was such a success that in 1940 Francis Poulenc wrote the music for piano and narrator and played the first performance in 1946.

In 1962, with the story and music so popular, that the score was transcribed (re-written) for a small orchestra by English composer David Matthews.

Poulenc is now best known for *Babar the Little Elephant*.



The Story of *Babar the Little Elephant*

Babar is a little elephant who is living happily in the jungle when his mother is killed by a hunter.

Babar escapes the hunter and he runs away from the jungle. He runs so far that he arrives in the city.

An old lady meets him and looks after him, showing Babar all the sights and sounds of the big city, even buying him clothes to wear and giving him cake to eat.

His friends, Celeste and Arthur have been very worried and have been searching for Babar and they find him in the city. They all return to the jungle.

Later, the King of the Elephants suddenly dies from food poisoning.

The elephants vote Babar the new King of the Elephants and he marries Celeste and all the elephants live happily ever after.



IMPROVISE

Francis Poulenc created the music for *Babar the Little Elephant* by making up the music in the moment. The music created the feeling or atmosphere of the story.

Describe music that makes you think about a place, an event or an animal.

What words would you use to describe:

A deep dark jungle

LOUD

SOFT

A busy city

LEGATO

FAST

SLOW

An elephant

SMOOTH

HIGH

LOUD

A mouse

LOW

LONG

STACCATO

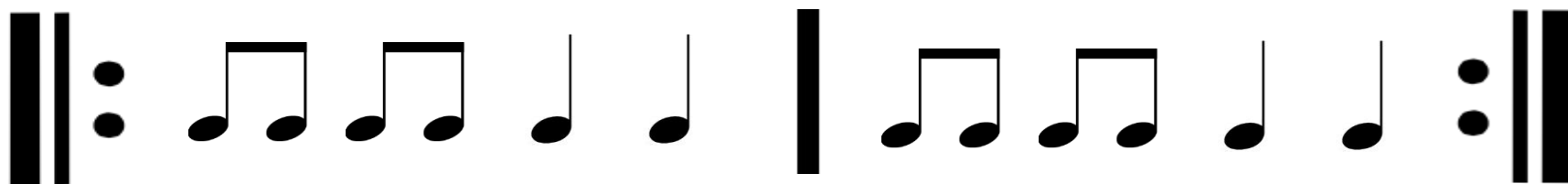
SHORT



Activity 1: Create your own style

Use the rhythm that Poulenc created to begin Babar's story, and create your own music:

- Clap the rhythm.
- Choose the tempo (speed). Would you like your rhythm fast or slow?
- Choose your dynamics. Would you like your rhythm loud or soft or both?
- Choose an instrument on which to play your rhythm. Will you use a drum or a triangle?
- Perform your improvised composition for your friends.
- Join your rhythms with others to create a longer composition.
- Play your rhythms with others at the same time.
- Teach your rhythm to someone else.





Activity 2: Compose your own music

With a combination of Babar's rhythms, compose your own music for the story.

Babar in the deep dark jungle.

Beat



- Choose a slow tempo
- Choose instruments that give a dark, smooth sound. Try a cabasa, cymbal or guiro?
- Add a beat on a bass drum.
- Extension - Change your tempo, dynamics and/or instruments when the hunter is chasing Babar.



Activity 2: Compose your own music

With a combination of Babar's rhythms, compose your own music for the story.

Babar in the big city.

Beat

- Choose a fast tempo
- Choose instruments that give a picture of fast cars, car horns, sky scrapers, lots of people
- Put two rhythms together. Add random sounds on a beat to create sound effects of the city.

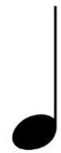
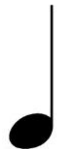


Activity 2: Compose your own music

With a combination of Babar's rhythms, compose your own music for the story.

Babar eating cake with his friends.

Beat



- Choose a tempo
- Choose instruments that sound like lots of fun. Add low sound and high sounds.
- Add a beat on a woodblock.



Activity 2: Compose your own music

With a combination of Babar's rhythms, compose your own music for the story.

Babar returns to the jungle and becomes King of the Elephants.

Beat

The image displays two musical staves. Above the first staff are four orange stars, each positioned above a quarter note. The first staff begins with a double bar line, followed by four quarter notes, a bar line, three quarter notes, a quarter rest, and ends with a double bar line. The second staff begins with a double bar line, followed by two eighth notes, two eighth notes, a quarter note, and a quarter note, a bar line, two eighth notes, two eighth notes, a quarter note, and a quarter note, ending with a double bar line.

- Choose a strong marching tempo
- Choose instruments that sound grand. Add bells on the beat.
- Create the sound of a royal parade.



Activity 3: Tell your own story

Write your own story in 3 parts with an introduction and an ending.

- Introduction – Set with scene with your chosen rhythm or melody.
- Part A Begin the story
- Part B Something happens to change the place, the people or what they are doing
- Part A Return the story to where it started.
- Coda (ending) – Finish your composition.

Perform your story of *Babar the Little Elephant* with your own music.

Babar in the Jungle

Babar in the big city

Babar eating cake with his friends

Babar returns to the Jungle and becomes King of the Elephants.

DISCOVER - Level 1 Beginning

Ideal for those beginning their musical journey.

Content and delivery relates to Levels 1 and 2 of Australian Curriculum (The Arts).

| CURRICULUM | DETAILS |
|--|--|
| Literacy | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Cause and effect, compare and contrast• Compose, contribute and respond in groups and different settings.• Summarise and analyse information• Acknowledge viewpoints of others• Use music, historical and context language appropriately in written and spoken form.• Understand and use music literacy, creating and writing concepts as per The Arts – Music Curriculum up to Year 5 |
| Numeracy | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Subdivision into groups• Fractions in relation to time signatures |
| Studies of Society & Environment (SOSE) | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Time, Continuity and Change• Place and Space• Culture and Identity - ANZAC |
| Design and Technology and Science | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Sound changes according to devices and materials used.• Design and development of musical instruments• Languages and cultural practices• Enhance intercultural communication• Understand regional and cultural diversity |
| The Arts | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Gross and fine motor skills (music, dance)• Rhythm, beat and patterns, structure and form (music, dance, drama)• Storytelling and improvisation (music, media)• Duration, beat, time values (music)• Pitch, intervals, melody , harmony (music)• Sound sources, tone colour (music)• Dynamics (music)• Texture ,shade, contrast and patterns (visual arts, music)• Positive and negative space (visual arts) |
| Health &Physical Education | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Physical, social, emotional and cognitive dimensions of music.• Behaviours and choices for quality of life.• Individual and group interaction for health and well-being.• Enhance experiences through interpersonal behaviours, respecting cultural protocols, relationships in groups, working cooperatively and being aware of others. |

Australian Curriculum – Music

| Elements of Music | Foundation to Year 2 | Years 3 and 4 | Years 5 and 6 | Years 7 and 8 | Years 9 and 10 |
|-----------------------|--|---|--|--|--|
| Rhythm | Beat and rhythm Fast/slow Long/short | Tempo changes ostinato | Compound metre | Time signature Rhythmic devices - anacrusis, syncopation, ties and pause | Regular and irregular time subdivision Triplet, duplet Motif, Augmentation/ diminution |
| Pitch | High/low Pitch direction Pitch matching Unison | Pentatonic patterns Melodic shape Intervals Treble clef and staff | Major scales Pitch sequences, arpeggio, riff, Bass clef | Minor scales Key & key signatures Major/minor chords Ledger lines | Tonal centres, Modulation Consonance/dissonance Chromaticism |
| Dynamics & Expression | Forte, piano | Dynamic gradations <i>pp</i> to <i>ff</i> Legato & staccato | Staccato, legato accent | Dynamic gradations Articulations relevant to style | Rubato, vibrato, ornamentation |
| Form and Structure | Introduction Same/different, echo patterns, repetition Verse, chorus, round | Question & answer Repeat signs Binary (AB) form Ternary (ABA) form | Theme, motif Phrase Rondo (ABACA) form ostinato | Repetition and contrast Theme and Variation Verse chorus, bridge | Motivic development Sonata form Interlude, Improvisation |
| Timbre | How sound is produced Every voice and instrument has its own sound | Recognise orchestral instruments by sound In isolations and in combination | Acoustic and electronic sounds Voice and instrument types | Recognise instrumental groups | Identify instruments by name and sound production. |
| Texture | Melody Accompaniment Drone | Patterns occurring simultaneously | Contrast within layers of sound | Layers of sound and their role. Unison, homo/ polyphonic | Horizontal/vertical layers countermelody |
| Creating | Creating sounds using voice and instruments | | | | |
| Performing | Playing instruments in groups. | Rhythms | Playing and reading melodic and rhythmic excerpts | | Sing and play in two or more parts |
| Responding | Moving to beat and rhythms | Respond to the stories. | Historical context | | Awareness of ensemble |



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