

MAURA PIERLOT

The TROUBLE in TUNE TOWN



Media kit

MAURA PIERLOT

Illustrated by Sophie Norsa

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MEDIA RELEASE



Author Maura Pierlot

Book Launch

- WHEN** Sunday, 6 May, 2pm
- WHERE** National Library of Australia
- WHAT** Special performance by the Youth Strings Ensemble, Music for Canberra
- Author reading
- Book signing
- Children's activities

Free entry.
Bookings encouraged

www.nla.gov.au/content/whats-on

"Children learning a musical instrument should relax and not worry about playing the wrong notes," says author Maura Pierlot.

Her new picture book, *The Trouble in Tune Town*, is a fun, imaginative fantasy told in rhyme, featuring a frustrated young performer and her song's quirky music notes. To be launched on 6 May at 2pm at the National Library of Australia, the book was inspired by the author's three children.

"Our kids loved playing piano but it often seemed like weekly practice was taking the fun out of music for them," Dr Pierlot said. "I think learning sometimes focuses too much on achievement and outcomes, and doesn't place enough value on the process and effort."

Promoting the heartfelt message, 'Practice should never be a fight. If you're having fun, then you're playing all right', this clever and highly original story touches on the themes of persistence, resilience, belonging, and self-belief.

"*The Trouble in Tune Town* encourages kids to relax, try their best, believe in themselves, and to learn from, and not fear, their mistakes," Dr Pierlot said.

"I think learning should be an end in itself, not just a means to an end, whether an ATAR or a job. Otherwise, the journey becomes utilitarian and lacks balance, with kids stressing and often feeling like they've failed when they don't achieve certain outcomes."

The Trouble in Tune Town is available from the NLA Bookshop, Harry Hartog in Woden, and online at thetroubleintunetown.com.

Woohoo!

TESTIMONIALS



"This clever book is about so much more than music. Its enchanting words, vibrant colours and entertaining rhythm encourage kids to try their best at everything they do while remembering to have fun!"

D Kelleher, Boston

"The Trouble in Tune Town is a delightfully upbeat, dynamic and reassuring story with fun, quirky and alluring concepts to encourage music and instrument exploration. Any music enthusiast from age three will actively sing out for this book time and time again."

Just Write for Kids Australia

"A delightful and clever story that will inspire any young musician. Such joy!"

S Weaver, Canberra

"Rhyming text and flowing illustrations tell the story with a musicality that will appeal to kids and adults. A glossary ensures you'll learn about music too."

A Hill , Blue Mountains





Maura Pierlot – Author Bio

Maura loves words and has been writing ever since she can remember. *The Trouble in Tune Town* is her first children's picture book. Late last year, Maura was named winner of the CBCA NSW Aspiring Writers Mentorship Program, and recipient of the Charlotte Waring Barton Award, for her young adult manuscript, *Freefalling*. Her short plays have been performed in Melbourne, Brisbane and Sydney, with one winning an international monologue competition and another being redeveloped as a full-length play as part of a KSP Fellowship in WA. Over the years, Maura has worked as a medical journalist, magazine editor, small business owner, marketing consultant and ethicist. A native New Yorker who moved to Australia over 25 years ago, Maura has a PhD in philosophy and enjoys talking about big ideas. She lives in Canberra with her husband and three children, aged 16-20.



Sophie Norsa – Illustrator Bio

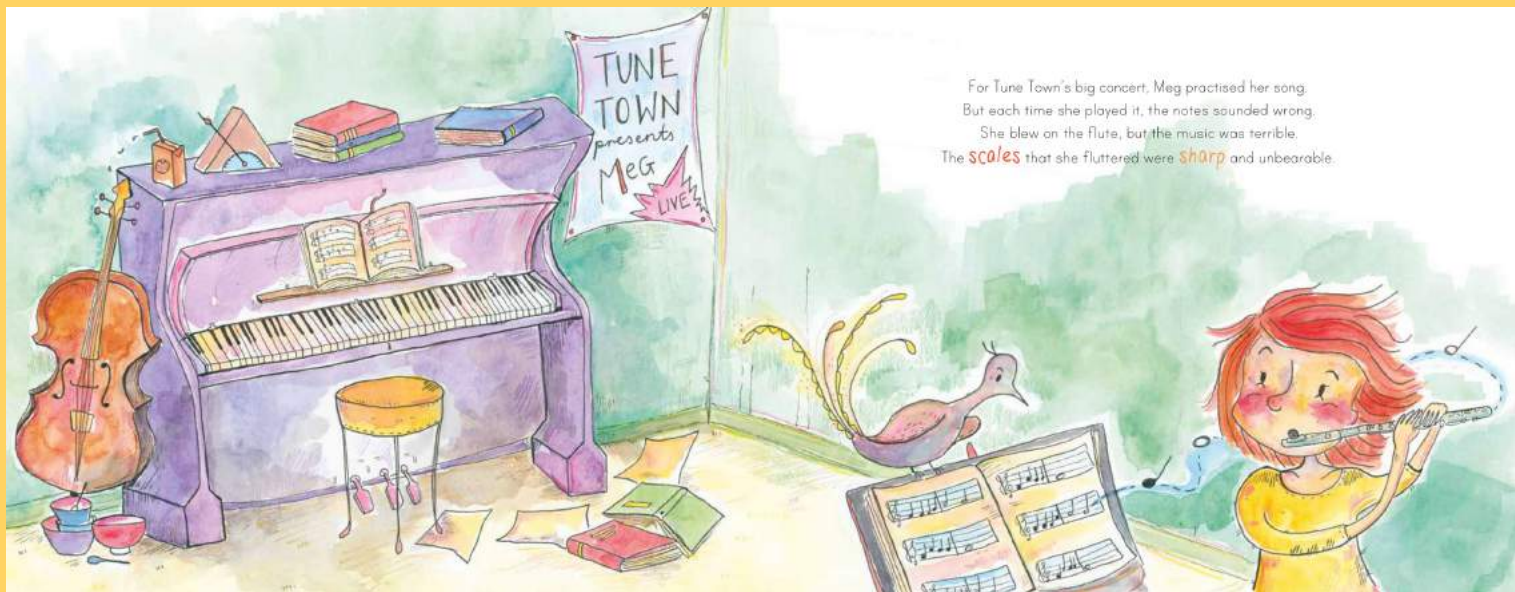
Sophie's artistic talents were recognised by New Frontier Publishing when she was a work experience student at the company. She has written and illustrated her own book, *Lisa Absolutely Loves Art*, and her illustrated work for *Yellow Dress Day* put her on the shortlist for the 2013 CBCA Crichton Award. Her other illustrated works include *Matilda Saves Santa Claus*, *Emilia Mouse*, *Elephant Kitten* and *Where Do Teachers Go at Night?* Sophie enjoys playing across styles and mediums of illustration.





Book Excerpt

Meg is Tune Town's best music performer, but she's having trouble rehearsing. So much trouble, in fact, that the notes have run right off the sheet. Can Meg find the notes in time for her big concert? Or are they closer to home than she thought?



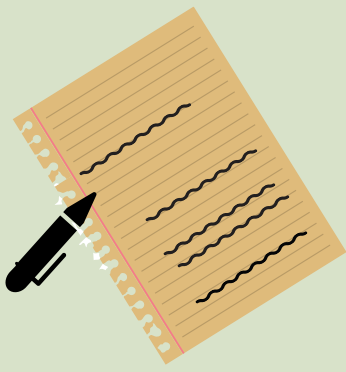
For Tune Town's big concert, Meg practised her song. But each time she played it, the notes sounded wrong. She blew on the flute, but the music was terrible. The **scales** that she fluttered were **sharp** and unbearable.



On the flute and the tuba, the song wasn't there. The notes had all vanished, and no one knew where!

The crowd was amazed — not a **tune** could be heard. The notes had gone missing. How very absurd!





AUTHOR INTERVIEW

What important message forms the basis for *The Trouble in Tune Town*?

The underlying message of the story is "Practice should never be a fight. If you're having fun, then you're playing all right". On some levels, that's my appeal that even though we should always try our best, the outcome should never become more important than the process. In fact, we learn a great deal about ourselves and others through effort, and can still attain a high sense of enjoyment, pride and satisfaction, even when we don't reach the mark. Using music as a metaphor, I've seen some very talented musicians play superbly on a technical level, but with little passion, and I've seen others make mistakes but play with an infectious level of energy and enthusiasm. I think we would all benefit from a bit more of the latter.

What are some of the themes of the book?

The book touches on the themes of resilience, self-belief, perseverance and belonging – traits that are important for overcoming all kinds of struggles, not just music practice! When a frustrated Meg can't work out her new song, she blames the notes who, feeling dejected, fly off the sheet and far away, leaving Tune Town without any tunes! With no notes to play, Meg hums the tune, reinforcing the innate musicality that we all have, whether or not we play an instrument, and learns a very important lesson when the notes arrive just in time for her big performance!

What inspired the character of Meg and her troubles with music?

Meg represents the struggling student who wants to give up out of sheer frustration, and suffering from some degree of anxiety about making mistakes. The story was inspired by our three children, now aged 16 to 20, who had piano and other music lessons for several years. Although they loved playing their instruments, they never wanted to practice – a challenge echoed by many other families. Through kids' eyes, lessons can be a chore, another obligation in a busy week of school work and co-curricular, and ours often felt like the learning process highlighted what they did wrong, rather than how far they had come. Children have different personality types, learning styles and musical interests and abilities, and I think music lessons – and all learning, really – need to engage students so they can develop skills in a fun and enjoyable way. Learning and enjoyment are often mutually exclusive but they don't need to be.

What do you hope readers gain from following Meg's musical journey?

I hope young readers appreciate the magic and wonder of music, seeing it as a source of joy, not of stress or obligation. I hope they accept the challenge of learning new songs in a balanced way – doing the best they can, knowing that it's not a race, and remembering to have fun along the way. I hope they learn to dig deep and persevere because sometimes in life it's just too easy to give up. Rather than strive for perfection, I hope kids are never afraid to try new things, or to make mistakes, and learn to pick themselves back up when things don't go to plan. That's where the real growth comes from.



The Trouble in Tune Town

BY MAURA PIERLOT

Illustrated by Sophie Norsa
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Little Steps Publishing (August 2017)
RRP \$24.95



The Trouble in Tune Town is a fun, imaginative fantasy told in rhyme, featuring Meg and her song's quirky music notes. Music-loving children will identify with a frustrated Meg, who wants to give up when she can't play her song perfectly. This clever story invites readers to step inside the experience of music. Its reassuring message – If you're having fun then you're playing all right – encourages children to relax, try their best and find joy in all that they do. The lyrical text encourages repeat reading and musical role-play. Colourful music terms throughout the text are explained in a glossary, providing a simple but excellent introduction to musical theory.

Themes

Persistence • Overcoming frustration • Self-belief • Resilience • Belonging

Curriculum areas

ACELT1575

Recognise that texts are created by authors who tell stories and share experiences that may be similar or different to students' own experiences

ACELT1585

Listen to, recite and perform poems, chants, rhymes and songs, imitating and inventing sound patterns including alliteration and rhyme

ACELY1648

Identify some differences between imaginative and informative texts

ACAMUM080

Develop aural skills by exploring and imitating sounds, pitch and rhythm patterns using voice, movement and body percussion

ACELA1787

Explore different ways of expressing emotions, including verbal, visual, body language and facial expressions

Discussions and activities

1. Before reading

Show the cover/title and ask, 'What do you think this story is about?' 'What is coming off the page of the book?' 'What kind of bird is that?' Show the title page and ask students to identify the instruments. Does this page tell them more about the story? Read the poster on the first page aloud. Ask what they think is going to happen.



2. Read the story through once

Ask questions to help the students to understand the narrative, such as: What is Meg feeling when she plays the flute, the tuba and the piano? Why is she practising so much? Why do the notes go away? How does Meg make them come back? What clever idea does the bandleader have? How does the story end? How do you think Meg feels at the end of the story?

3. Now begin to explore some of the themes

Ask students if they have tried to play a musical instrument. Is it easy or hard? How do you know what note to play? Is practising fun? What do you do if it feels too hard? Is it the same when you learn to swim, or play soccer, netball or tennis? Or maybe learn to read? Do you sometimes want to give up? What do you do when you feel that way? These questions can be explored again when you talk about the story idea (Point 8).

4. Visual literacy

Show students that some of the words are different. Ask them what they notice is different. Why do they think the writer has chosen to highlight certain words? Show them the glossary at the end of the book and explain what it is for. Encourage students to follow the lyrebird through the story. Why is it there? Does it help to understand the story? Would you like the story as much if there were no bird?

5. Lyrebirds

Ask students, 'What is a lyrebird?' Have they seen one? Why is it called a lyrebird? What is a lyre? Explain how it mimics the sound of other birds. Share the website <http://www.kidcyber.com.au/lyrebirds/>.

6. Music and language

Ask students if they noticed that the book is written in rhyme. Ask them to point out pairs of words that rhyme. Discuss and list the rhyming words. Ask them to think of other words that rhyme. Ask students to identify all the words that describe or are about music. Find a picture in the book where the music is written down. Can they read it? Explain that music notation is like a language, with different notes in different positions representing different sounds.

7. Activities

Encourage students to copy elements of notes onto paper to make a mobile that can be hung in the classroom. It might be fun to make a lyrebird too. Trace the body shape and have students make the tail feathers and hang it up with the musical notes. They can watch their own notes fly away in the breeze!

8. Talk about the idea

Talk about the idea: Practice should never be a fight. If you're having fun, then you're playing all right.

9. Word search

The grid on the next page has music-related terms hidden in it. Copy a sheet for each child and ask them to find as many words as they can.



The Trouble in Tune Town – Word Search

M	U	S	I	C	B	E	L	H	K	L	B	C
I	A	D	T	N	E	E	T	R	E	S	T	A
N	O	W	N	P	I	T	C	H	Y	A	O	S
O	E	H	A	R	M	O	N	Y	B	I	N	H
R	T	O	U	P	B	E	A	T	A	T	E	A
C	F	L	U	T	E	T	T	H	S	J	A	R
H	T	E	M	P	O	U	U	M	S	A	O	P
O	W	N	U	D	U	N	B	D	C	Z	U	I
R	D	O	W	N	B	E	A	T	L	Z	N	A
D	R	T	P	D	S	C	A	L	E	S	T	N
T	R	E	B	L	E	C	L	E	F	S	B	O
D	U	H	A	A	I	E	N	R	R	M	A	T
T	I	M	E	S	I	G	N	A	T	U	R	E

Bar
Bass clef
Downbeat
Flute
Harmony
Key
Jazz
Minor chord

Music
Note
Piano
Pitch
Rest
Rhythm
Scales
Sharp

Tempo
Time signature
Tone
Treble Clef
Tuba
Tune
Upbeat
Whole note

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The Trouble in Tune Town

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