



The Worst Band in the Universe

Graeme Base

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Castigated for defying tradition and playing an original tune on his Splingtawnger, thirteen-year-old Sprocc leaves Planet Bipp in search of musical freedom and enters the annual Worst Band in the Universe Competition. Includes a CD of songs supposedly recorded by the bands in the story.

The Worst Band in the Universe Details

Date : Published September 1st 1999 by Harry N. Abrams (first published 1999)

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Author : Graeme Base

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From Reader Review The Worst Band in the Universe for online ebook

AD says

The Worst Band in the Universe is a magical picture book for older readers. The text is all in rhyming verse, but there's a big story to tell so it's not a simple quick-read picture book. The illustrations are out of this world (literally). Together, the text and pictures tell the story of Sprocc, a young musician from Planet Blipp, and his desire to create new music. But there are forces that want to keep all the music exactly as it has always been, and they will try anything to stop Sprocc from playing something new. Who will win? Read this epic picture book to find out!

Phillip Treisman says

The Worst Band in the Universe is a Children's Picture Book, intended for children aged six to ten. The book is both written and illustrated by Graeme Base, famous for his richly illustrated picture books like *Animalia* and *The Eleventh Hour*. Like *The Eleventh Hour*, *The Worst Band in the Universe* is written in metered, rhyming verse, which adheres to a rigid structure throughout the book. Unlike any other book I have ever read however, this book is a multimedia experience: the book comes with a CD containing original (written and performed by Graeme himself) musical tracks that correspond, chronologically by track number, to the story of the book. The songs aren't musical versions of the text, however. Some of them are the songs that are played by the characters of the story in various settings, and some of them accompany the story in an obvious ways, but each is also a standalone song, and the album holds together thematically and sonically as a cohesive single unit. It significantly enhances the experience of reading the book, and the rhyming verse the story is presented in synthesizes beautifully with the musical accompaniment. Further, the songs are written with a lot of "futuristic" synthesizers and vocal effects, enhancing the reader's immersion in the sci-fi space opera setting of the book.

As a child, this was my absolute favorite book, and it still holds up now. The music is of high enough quality to warrant listening to independent of the book, and the two of them together are simply outstanding.

Thebruce1314 says

Wow...I was impressed before, but now I think Mr. Base must be one of the most talented people on Earth. He wrote this rhyming story of epic proportions, illustrated it AND wrote and recorded the music. The artwork for this one deals completely with fictional alien characters (as opposed to the animals that I'm used to seeing), but the pictures are still ridiculously intricate and lovely. My only complaint is that the story itself is very long - only a problem if trying to share it with a little one - but I still very much enjoyed it. A great story, and a good message about the importance of self-expression and creativity (something Graeme Base has in spades). Too bad this is out of print, as it should be more readily available to everyone!

Eric says

This book is awesome. Graeme Base is a genius. I remember that he wrote this book called the eleventh hour that I read years ago and I loved it. So I recognized his name and bought this book at a stoop sale in Brooklyn, NY. This book comes with a cd that I've yet to listen to but the story and the message are dead on. Every young musician should be given this book as a present. Frank Zappa somewhere is cheering.

Terri says

This would be a very fun read-aloud book, even in middle years, to introduce the idea of innovation and change in society. Like all Base books, the lyric style is fun and his names for creatures are a riot to read out loud. It would be interesting to have a discussion starting with musical innovation (e.g. what's new and how does it build on existing styles and trends) and then to spin off into science, business, policy, etc.

Meredith Estes says

Graeme Base is one of my favorite artists and authors. We have many of his books and love them all. This was different from his others in that it wasn't animals, however, it was just as satisfying. He is so great at developing whole worlds so richly. This was no exception. I studied the illustrations just as hard as I do with every one of his books.

Cruth says

Author/Illustrator: Graeme Base

First Published: 1999

Extras: No CD, paperback.

Beautifully illustrated, unusual picture book, focussing on music. Humorous and clever with a rhyming narrative that encourages reading aloud as well as Base's typically lush illustrations. Without the expected puzzles the reader is left to simply enjoy the imagery and poetry.

A book that will appeal to and challenge young boys, but not so gender-specific it rules out the other half.

Age

Read Aloud: 7+

Read Yourself: 9+

(ISBN 9780140565874)

Hannah Delaughter says

This amazing science fiction picture book is about a young alien named Sprocc who is also a musician. His planet only allows traditional music that has been passed down and looks down upon Sprocc's kind of music. This nearly gets him kicked out of his planet. Even though he wasn't kicked out, he decides to go to a different planet and meet new friends. When he meets new people, he learns about a competition that is called, "The Worst Band in the Universe." He won the competition and met more friends. His band mates and him decide to build a ship and head back to his home planet. When they head back, they throw a huge concert and the oldest leader on his home planet told them that they are the new generation of music. I gave this book five stars because I feel like it has a great message and the wording in this book was fantastic. This reminds me that no matter what kind of music or even life style you are in to, you should always stick up for yourself and you will eventually find new friends that will love you no matter what. This reminds me of something similar that I went through when I was in middle school. Everyone thought that I was weird because I liked musicals so much. That didn't change the way I thought about myself though and when I got into high school I found new friends that like musicals as much as I did and we all performed in them while we were in high school.

I can connect this to the classroom by reading this story out loud and then having the students write about what makes them unique and different. Some of the things that I would say to them to think about while writing would be, "What are your interests? Does this make you unique and why?" This would help them realize that everyone is different and unique in their own way.

The Lexile and guided reading for this book are not listed, but I think that the upper grades would appreciate this more and would be able to understand it. The wording and the message behind it is complicated and would be easier for third through fifth grade to really grasp the concept.

Paitsgreekgirl says

This is an amazing, mind-boggling book. This is not just a children's book. Graeme Base is a genius. The poetic rhythm of his writing, the creative illustrations, and the cosmic musical score impressed me beyond words. I can't wait to share this with my granddaughters.

Min says

Rhyming couplets lend an air of the epic to this musical tale of freedom of expression. A saga of the individual against the machinations of Tradition and Rules. The lone seeker plays his own tune. What lends greater power to it, is that there is a soundtrack! Performed by Graeme Base himself. Honestly, rather catchy tunes. I'm quite fond of W.Y.S.I.W.Y.G.

Jeevan Panesar says

Easily one of the most creative works of sci-fi. From the rhyming verse of the story, the stunning illustrations, and the well-produced accompanying album, Graeme Base makes this a tour de force of delight and wonder for both kids and adults.

D.A. Cairns says

A very different and clever book aimed at year 5/6 children but obviously able to be enjoyed by adults like me.

The book is amazingly illustrated and tells the tale of a young alien musician who lives on a planet where musical innovation is illegal. It is written in rhyming prose and it isn't short so to maintain the rhyming couplets and make them interesting and funny was impressive.

This book is quite hard to read because of the unusual sentence structure, quite sophisticated vocabulary and the use of numerous made up words, but once you get into the groove, it's a fascinating story. Very entertaining.

Maddy Rigsby says

This book is great for upper elementary students. The pictures are really grabbing and pull the reader in. This would be a great book to read during a science week, due to the book being about aliens. There are also many 'green' science experiments you could do to go along with this book.

Elizabeth says

Not sure why this is cataloged with the chapter books instead of the picture books, but this way I can remember where to find it. Though I will say it's pretty long for a picture book.

Ian says

great little book on censorship and playing new music and advancing boundaries

TheTinFoilHatter says

It's Graeme Base, so it's as good as you'd expect. But this one didn't do much for me, the alien designs look pretty bad and it's hard to define why I didn't like the story.
But that's me bitching, it's far from a bad book and you'll probably enjoy it.

Dolly says

This is an amazing, almost overwhelming book. The illustrations are mind-boggling as are all of the new

words and vocabulary that somehow seem to make perfect sense. The book is one long song/poem with a rhyming text that flows easily, but is awfully long. We could only read a couple pages at a time, but it only served to extend our enjoyment of this story. The accompanying CD has 25 minutes of songs on it that are catchy, funky and fun. I like the overall message of the story, about the importance of innovation and creativity and resisting the inertial pull of older, established generations who frown on the crazy inclinations of the young.

Elaine Will says

I'm an artist and was gifted this book as a teenager. Still one of my favourites. I'm astonished it's never been made into a movie.

Curtis says

It is a children's book - a fairly long children's book - but I really like. When it is Amos' bedtime and he doesn't want to go to bed he always picks this book for me to read to him because he knows it will take a long time to get through it.

Tish says

This is all Amos will listen to these days. It's a great read aloud book because of the great rhythm and funky words. It's about music, so that's a big bonus for Curt. I love listening to them read together!
