

The Useless Tune

AUTHOR

CHRIS UHLMANN

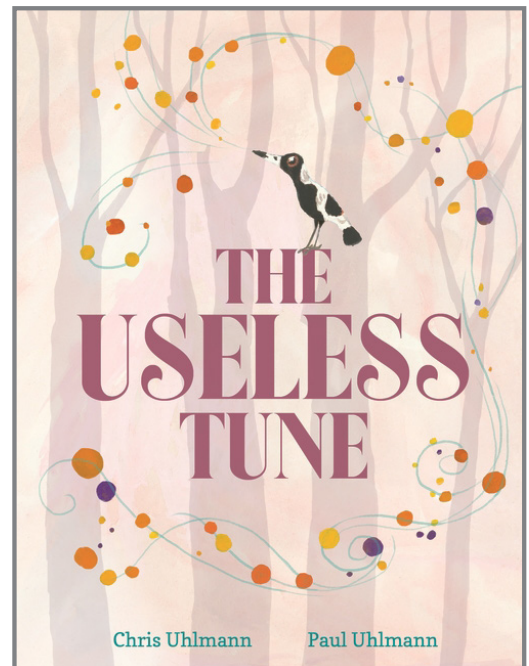
ILLUSTRATOR

PAUL UHLMANN

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RECOMMENDED FOR: Lower to Mid Primary



SYNOPSIS

All Maggie wants is to find a tree to call home, and has her own special song to offer in return for shelter. But the trees see Maggie either as trouble or as useless and tell her to go away. After all, her song can't protect the trees from drought, or fire, or loggers. Maggie thinks she will never find a home, until at last a humble Scribbly Gum asks to hear her melody . . .

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Chris Uhlmann is the former political editor for Nine News. He has worked in print, radio, television and online in a 30-year career in journalism. During two decades at the ABC he hosted a top rating Canberra breakfast program, anchored flagship programs AM and 730 and was the network's political editor. He won a Walkley Award for broadcasting interviewing in 2009 and was part of a Four Corners team that won the Gold Quill in 2018. Chris has also co-authored the Secret City trilogy of political fiction, which was adapted by Matchbox Pictures into an award-winning mini-series broadcast by Foxtel and Netflix.

ABOUT THE ILLUSTRATOR

Paul Uhlmann is a Fremantle based artist who makes artwork that seeks to understand the world as a living breathing unity. Paul studied art in Australia and Europe on two year-long scholarships—DAAD in Germany (1986-87) and Anne & Gordon Samstag International Visual Arts Scholarship in Holland (1994-95). He has exhibited nationally and internationally since 1983 and his work is held in many prominent collections. He is fortunate to teach art at Edith Cowan University in Perth, Australia. Paul has wonderful memories of throwing the footy around the front yard of their Canberra home with Chris and his other two brothers.

STUDY NOTES

- Before reading, view the cover and title of the book and identify the following:
 - The title
 - The author/illustrator
 - The publisher
 - The blurb.
- What do you think the story might be about from looking at the title only? Do your ideas change after seeing the cover?

- Write your own story using the title of the picture book.
- Based on the cover, what do you think this story is about? How do you think it will begin/end? Revisit your answer after reading the story to see if your predictions were correct.
- Discuss the title of the book. Do you think this is a good title? Why or why not? If you were asked to choose an alternative title for the book, what would it be? Remember, a good title should capture the audience's attention and give them an idea of what the book is about.
- Who do you think the audience for this book is? Why?
- Is the book an imaginative, informative or persuasive text? How can you tell?
- Literary techniques allow a writer to convey a deeper meaning in their text. What techniques can you find in this text eg. metaphor, imagery, alliteration or personification?
- What deeper meaning can you draw from the text?
- How do the illustrations add to the story? Do you think the illustrator has effectively told his story visually?
- Cover the text in the book and write your own story following the illustrations.
- Choose one of the spreads and have a class discussion about the following illustration decisions:
 - How do the illustrations add to the story?
 - How do you think the people are feeling? What clues might there be in the pictures?
 - Is there a main colour in this spread? How does it make you feel?
 - Do the colours change from spread to spread? Why might that be?
 - Do the pictures take up the whole page, or are they framed?
 - Are any of the words bigger on the page than the others? Why could that be?
- Research the illustrator and other books they have illustrated. Discuss the medium used by the illustrator (watercolour, ink, acrylic, etc.) Draw or paint a picture in the style of the illustrations used in the book. Do some research on the illustrator. Is this their usual style?