

Reviewed by **Lisa Sullivan**

17 Kings and 42 Elephants

Written by Margaret Mahy

Pictures by Patricia MacCarthy

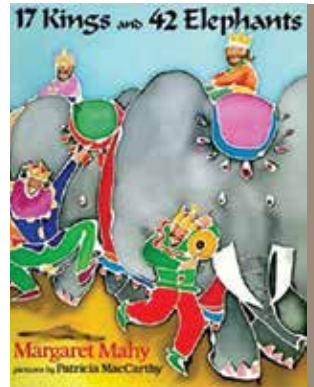
New York, NY: Dial Books for Young Readers, 1987

This book works well for teaching high C on recorder. For example, have your students play ostinati on pitched and unpitched instruments as accompaniment to the recorder, with the recorder coming in between the verses

of the story and the accompaniment playing throughout as the beat. Use the text to create the ostinati that layer together to support the story—you can also easily create many different types of ostinati by pulling out one or two of the verses. For example, “Peacocks fluttering their fine fantails,” could become “Peacocks fluttering, peacocks fluttering, peacocks fluttering their fine fantails!” Or you might use “Baggy ears like big umbrellaphants” or “Tinkling tunesters, twangling trillicans.” Create melodies or have your students create their own. They will also enjoy using the rhythm of the text for their improvisations.

The book offers countless engaging and inventive ways to stimulate creativity and young imaginations. Your students will delight in being part of this fanciful journey as they play with the language, rhythmic structure, and lively illustrations throughout. *17 Kings and 42 Elephants* has been a favorite in my classroom for many years and will quickly become a favorite in yours, too. ■

LISA SULLIVAN has taught music at Mohawk Trails Elementary in Carmel, IN for 28 years. Lisa holds a bachelor's degree in music from Butler University and a master's degree in education from Ball State University. She served as the AOSA Region VI representative and has presented at multiple NafME, AOSA, and IMEA conferences. Lisa teaches Orff Schulwerk Levels at Anderson University in Anderson, Indiana and DePaul University in Chicago, Illinois.



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17 *Kings and 42 Elephants* by Margaret Mahy features a rhyme about kings and elephants on a journey and what they see along the way. One of the most enticing parts of the book for children is the imagery the vocabulary evokes. The rhythmic text teases with a number of delightful and challenging tongue twisters. You definitely have to practice before you share this story with children!

Patricia MacCarthy's colorful pictures convey the impression of an exotic, faraway land and contribute greatly to the book's whimsy and charm. Even upper elementary students love the vibrant illustrations and the tricky, twisty text. Invented words such as “baboonsters” and “gorillacans” bring smiles to children of all ages. As the journey continues, travelers see a number of exotic creatures such as “Green-eyed dragons, rough as rockodiles” and “Proud and ponderous hippopotomums.” By the end of the story, when the tracks made by the kings and elephants are being “devoured” by the “deep dark jungle,” readers feel as though they were part of this amazing journey.