

Carnival of the Animals

Lesson Plan

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Grade Level(s): Multiple ages – KG – Grade 2

Subject(s):

- Music

Duration: 30 minutes

To listen to *The Carnival of the Animals* by Saint-Saens, and to identify the mood and character of each animal.

Goals: Students will recognize that music can be used to represent different effects.

Objectives: Students will identify the animals sounds being played to them.

Materials:

- [The Best of Saint-Saens](#) CD. Emd/Emi Classics - #69112 / January 8, 1988.
Audio CD / AAD / Number of Discs: 1 ASIN: B000002SDI
- CD player

Procedure:

Read 'The Story about Ping' by Marjorie Flack.

Talk about swans and ducks. Discuss their similarities.

Tell group about 'The Carnival of the Animals' and the composer Saint- Saens

Saint-Saens was very fond of animals and wrote a book about them. One year while he was on holiday, he composed some music, which he called *The Carnival of the Animals*. The music is written to reflect the type of animal it is about.

Saint-Saens was born in Paris. He became famous as a composer and also as a very clever pianist. He first played the piano at a concert when he was only 8 years old, and he was still giving concerts when he was 85.

Show a sheet with a picture of a violin, glockenspiel, xylophone, flute, clarinet, double bass, piano and a cello.

Lay out a list of all the 14 animals, which he wrote music for. For this lesson I want to focus on the swan.

Ask the children which instruments they think Saint-Saens used for each animal.

Listen to the excerpts for these animals using [*The Carnival of the Animals*](#) by Saint-Saens.

Discuss how the music represents the different animals.

Identify the mood and character of each animal. There are fourteen movements.

I- *Introduction et marche royale du Lion* (Introduction and Royal March of the Lion)
Discuss the musical elements used to achieve this. The piece starts with the lions waking up, stretching before they spring to their feet. Loud roaring sounds played on the pianos and later strings, warn us how fierce these animals are. Strings and pianos

II- *Poules et Coqs* (Hens and Roosters)

III- *Hémiones (animaux véloces)* (Wild Asses; quick animals)

IV- *Tortues* ([Tortoises](#)) A musical joke. This piece is 'the Can-Can' played much slower. Strings and pianos

V- *L'Éléphant* (The Elephant) Starts with plodding music and then another musical joke. The elephant would like to be a dancer, the music should be graceful but is a 'clumsy' dance tune (Saint-Saens borrowed this music from French composer Berlioz).

VI- *Kangourous* (Kangaroos)

VII- *Aquarium*

VIII- *Personnages à longues oreilles* (Characters with Long Ears)

Three violins: This is the shortest of all the movements. The violins alternate playing high, loud notes and low, buzzing ones (in the manner of a donkey's braying "hee-haw").

IX- *Le coucou au fond des bois* (The Cuckoo in the Depths of the Woods)

X- *Volière* (Aviary) Strings, piano and flute: The high strings take on a background role, providing a buzz in the background that is reminiscent of the background noise of a jungle. The flute takes the part of the bird, with a trilling tune that spans much of its range. The pianos provide occasional ping and trills of other birds in the background. The movement ends very quietly after a long ascending scale from the flute.

XI- *Pianistes* (Pianists)

XII- *Fossiles* (Fossils) - Another musical joke. A piece made up of several tunes which he has 'dug up' from the past. A very skeletal piece: Xylophone.

XIII- [Le Cygne](#) (The Swan) Two pianos and cello: This is by far the most famous movement of the suite, often performed solo and is used to showcase the interpretive skills of the cellist. The lushly romantic cello solo (which evokes the swan elegantly

gliding over the water) is played over rippling sixteenths in one piano and rolled chords in the other (representing the swan's feet, hidden from view beneath the water, propelling it along).

XIV- Finale

Full ensemble: This movement is somewhat reminiscent of an American carnival from the middle of the twentieth century, with one piano always maintaining a bouncy eighth note rhythm. Many of the previous movements are quoted here from the introduction, the asses, hens, and kangaroos.

Assessment:

- Did the children recognize which instruments were being used to represent each animal?
Could they recognize which animal was being played when hearing the music?
- Are they able to conjure the imagery of the swan intended by the musician.
- Talk about the differences in the musical of X. aviary and XII .swan.

Follow Up:

Follow this lesson up by talking and listening to the various sounds that water makes for example the sound of rivers, lakes, oceans and rain. Are these sounds musical. Listen to recordings of water sounds and guess what body of water would make these sounds.

Internet Resources:

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Carnival_of_the_Animals

Carnival of the Animals: Classical Music for Kids by Camille Saint-Saens, Barrie C. Turner, and Sue Williams (Hardcover - April 21, 1999): Book and CD set available at your local library.